DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 473 929 PS 031 084

AUTHOR	Gatenio, Shirley
TITLE	Taking a Giant Step: A Case Study of New York City's Efforts to Implement Universal Pre-Kindergarten Services. Working Paper Series.
INSTITUTION	Foundation for Child Development, New York, NY.
PUB DATE	2002-04-00
NOTE	41p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Foundation for Child Development, 145 32nd Street, 14th Floor, New York, NY 10016-6055. Tel: 212-213-8337; Fax: 212-213-5897; Web site: http://www.ffcd.org. For full text: http://www.ffcd.org/ pdfs/GiantStep.pdf.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Access to Education; Agency Cooperation; Case Studies; *Change Strategies; Educational Policy; *Politics of Education; *Preschool Education; Program Descriptions; Program Effectiveness; *Public Policy
IDENTIFIERS	*New York (New York); *Universal Preschool

ABSTRACT

This working paper examines why Project Giant Step, a well-received policy initiative for universal preschool for 4-year-olds in New York City, was discontinued after overcoming many of the challenges it faced. Project Giant Step forced collaboration between large public agencies differing in their institutional structures, funding sources, and service delivery systems and involved a well-developed half-day curriculum, state-of-the-art equipment, and the use of family workers to maximize parental involvement and the provision of family support services. This paper explores the reasons universal prekindergarten was introduced, the goals of New York City Mayor Koch's initiatives, the process by which it was implemented, and the economic, political, racial, and personal reasons for the program's termination under a new mayoral administration. Based on conclusions drawn from the case study, the following observations are offered for consideration in the development of new prekindergarten programs: (1) a city's infrastructure must have the ability to absorb proposed changes; (2) policy implementation does not follow neatly prescribed, sequential steps; (3) external and internal support throughout the phases of implementation is critical; (4) because public policy development is complicated by interlocking goals, the public needs to be reminded of policy goals throughout the process; and (5) policy change is incremental and typically spreads over a number of years. Three appendices summarize Mayor Koch's Early Childhood Education Commission recommendations for universal preschool, graphically portray the institutions influencing Project Giant Step, and delineate the individuals interviewed for this report. (Contains 44 references.) (KB)

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WORKING PAPER SERIES

TAKING A GIANT STEP:
A Case Study of New York City's Efforts To Implement Universal Pre-Kindergarten Services

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The Clearinghouse on International Developments
in Child, Youth & Family Policies of Columbia University

April 2002

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mayor Edward I. Koch first announced his ambitious goal of providing universal early education services to all four-year-olds in New York City in 1985. While interest in universally-available, publicly-funded preschool services was growing at the time, no one at any level of government had taken the bold step of introducing so comprehensive an initiative. The initiative, known as Project Giant Step, was designed to build upon the strengths of the three-pronged (albeit fragmented) delivery system that was in place at the time - child care, Head Start and public education preschool programs. Giant Step forced collaboration between two large public agencies: the Human Resource Administration's (HRA's) Agency for Child Development (ACD) and the Board of Education (BOE). The initiative was complicated by the differences in the institutional structures, funding sources and service delivery systems for each of the three early childhood programs.

Giant Step sought to meet the cognitive, social, emotional and physical development of children through a well-developed half-day curriculum, state of the art equipment, the use of family workers to maximize parental involvement and the provision of support services to families. Cognizant of the professional and institutional rivalries between ACD and BOE, the Mayor acted upon the recommendations of the Early Childhood Commission he had established and created a new mayoral office to oversee the administration of Giant Step at both agencies.

In its first two years of implementation, Giant Step confronted challenges from within city government related to the price tag of universal provision, ongoing competition among city agencies regarding the authority of the newly created mayoral office, and difficulties locating and developing classrooms in many communities. Despite these obstacles, evaluations of Project Giant Step during the first two years of its operation documented the strong success it had in achieving cognitive, social and emotional gains among participating children. Less than four years after its inception, however, the Project was dismantled.

This paper seeks to better understand why a well-received policy initiative was discontinued after overcoming many of the challenges it faced. The paper explores the reasons universal pre-kindergarten was introduced, the goals of the Mayor's initiative, and the process by which it was implemented. Years later, the success or failure of the Mayor's initiative is not clear. The dissolution of Giant Step can be viewed as sufficient evidence of its failure. Giant Step can also be seen as an important step in the evolution of the universal pre-kindergarten services in New York State. Today, universal pre-kindergarten has been enacted in three states and funding for universal pre-kindergarten services has multiplied several times over in most states since the mid-1980s. Better understanding the evolution of universal pre-kindergarten services in New York City and its implementation can perhaps help other localities that have interest in implementing universal preschool services. The experience of Project Giant Step points to the vulnerability of well-designed and well-received early childhood programs as they become implemented. It reminds us that sound policies and planning do not always make for viable practices.

It is not possible to make generalizations beyond this single-case study regarding implementation and policymaking, but a few observations are offered for discussion and consideration in the development of new pre-kindergarten programs.

LESSON ONE: A CITY'S INFRASTRUCTURE MUST HAVE THE ABILITY TO ABSORB THE PROPOSED CHANGES

Giant Step was built upon existing policy foundations that provided Giant Step needed stability, but this stability was compromised by the manifold changes being pursued simultaneously. Giant Step introduced universalism to public pre-kindergarten services; it attempted to integrate early childhood education and care policies, service delivery systems and professions, and to combine funding from three levels of government and private foundations. It not only tried to introduce an innovative curriculum for four-year-olds, but it also proposed using education dollars to fund services

provided by child-care and Head Start not-for-profit providers. Giant Step sought to introduce too many changes at the same time; the scope of change was beyond what could be managed while institutionalizing the new policy initiative. The changes that were likely next steps were accepted with relative ease and minimal resistance, but because a wide array of change was occurring most times, it was difficult for implementers to adequately attend to any one conflict without neglecting another.

LESSON TWO: POLICY IMPLEMENTATION DOES NOT FOLLOW NEATLY PRESCRIBED, SEQUENTIAL STEPS

The Commission's planning was thorough, creative and exemplary, but the implementation of the Commission's plan was choppy, at times requiring two steps back before implementation could go forward. The well-designed and researched plan assembled by the Commission contributed to many of the program's successes, but, as Giant Step taught us, the very best of plans often take longer than planned because fundamental issues will be renegotiated along the way. The failure to address issues related to salary inequities between BOE and ACD-sponsored staffs, the integration of child-care and preschool services, and the availability of affordable and adequate space for programs during implementation plagued the progress of the Giant Step.

LESSON THREE: EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL SUPPORT THROUGHOUT THE PHASES OF IMPLEMENTATION IS CRITICAL

A key to Giant Step's success was that it was a priority for the Koch Administration, and the Mayor's key staff persons genuinely cared about the implementation of the program and its success. At each phase of implementation, Giant Step had a key staff person who was well-connected to the power and authority of the mayoral administration and vested in the success of Giant Step. Giant Step suffered from the loss of such an individual when the next Mayoral Administration came into office.

Giant Step also taught us the value of keeping the community involved in the formulation, reformulation, and implementation of policies. The Commission made heroic efforts to draw the providers, parents and the provider community in the earliest stages, but there was no formal process of sustaining these efforts throughout the implementation process. The decision to abolish the Mayor's Office of Early Education that administered Giant Step did not elicit public outcry or highly visible protest from the community. Giant Step did not lack support from the community, but the community did not demonstrate the same kind of ownership exemplified by the public officials closely associated with the project.

LESSON FOUR: BECAUSE PUBLIC-POLICY DEVELOPMENT IS COMPLICATED BY INTERLOCKING GOALS, THE PUBLIC NEEDS TO BE REMINDED OF POLICY GOALS THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS

Deciding which goals to address requires a decision process that may precede systematic analysis of the problem itself. Even a single goal can have multiple interpretations, depending on timing and the groups involved. The policymaking of universal pre-kindergarten services in New York City emerged over time through a complex and fragmented process that spanned several public and private policymaking jurisdictions, each with its own agenda and historical relationship to the issue. The policy that emerged was a compromise among actors at all levels and of institutional roles. The ambiguity of authority and shared decision making both within the City's public institutions and among public and private sector entities created multiple goals, some of which were in conflict with one another and were further complicated by intergovernmental policymaking relationships.

LESSON FIVE: POLICY CHANGE IS INCREMENTAL AND TYPICALLY SPREADS OVER A NUMBER OF YEARS

It is as challenging to identify the beginning of a policy change as to identify its end. Typically, a policy process is thought to begin when an issue takes on a public character and public and private policymakers become involved. Mayor Koch's public announcement of his intention to introduce universal pre-kindergarten services launched a new policy in New York City, but this new policy was also an outgrowth and convergence of evolving national, state and local early childhood education and care policies. At the other end, was the dissolution of the Mayor's Office of Early Childhood Education and later Giant Step the end of a policy? Arguably not, because BOE continued a strikingly similar program under a new name and independent from City Hall. Six years later, the State of New York enacted legislation to implement statewide universal pre-kindergarten services in public schools and community-based organizations using a curriculum and staffing model similar to Giant Step and housed at BOE. From this perspective, Giant Step was more than a program – it ushered in new conceptual frameworks that have since taken hold across New York State and the nation. It is in this context that Giant Step should be understood as an important thread bringing together separate historical developments and leading us to the next level in early childhood education and care policy.

IN his State of the City message on January 30, 1985, Mayor Edward I. Koch announced a new policy initiative to "phase in public education for all four-year-olds in New York City" beginning in September 1986 (Koch, 1985). The Mayor's announcement took many by surprise. Universal pre-kindergarten had not been on the agenda of advocate and community groups. It had not appeared on the "wish list" of any of the City agencies.[1] Nor was it being imposed on the City by federal or state mandates. And while there was a growing appreciation for the positive impacts of preprimary socialization and education on the long-term development of young children, there were very few state and locally sponsored pre-kindergarten initiatives in the early 1980s. Only ten states funded state pre-kindergarten initiatives before 1985 (Mitchell et al., 1989).

THE IMPETUS FOR UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL EDUCATION IN NEW YORK CITY

Mayor Koch and his staff were intrigued by recently published findings from the Perry Preschool Project. High/Scope Foundation published a report, Changed Lives, which demonstrated long-term positive effects for low-income children who participated in the Perry Preschool Program, including improved cognitive performance during early childhood; improved scholastic achievement; decreased delinquency; crime; welfare dependency and teenage pregnancy rates; increased high school graduation rates and enrollments in post-secondary education and training programs (Berrueta-Clement et al., 1984).

The study seized the attention of City officials because the preschool model seemingly responded to several of the challenges confronting the City at the time. The Mayor's close aides were convinced that a high-quality preschool program, along the lines of Perry Preschool, could help arrest the concern of business leaders that City schools were not producing a future workforce that would keep the City competitive. A preschool program could also help ameliorate the effects of the City's escalating poverty rates and could provide needed socialization and school-readiness services to the children of the growing minority and immigrant populations in the City (Brezenoff, personal communication, 1998). Aides were less clear about how a preschool program would affect children and families of working mothers, but believed it would also benefit them (Brezenoff, personal communication, 1998; Schwarz; personal communication, 1997).

Deputy Mayors Stanley Brezenoff and Robert Wagner, Jr. were convinced that introducing a program to respond to the emerging needs of both children and the business community would be perceived favorably by the public (Brezenoff, personal communication, 1998). A positive public reception was important, given the impending reelection campaign. As the Mayor prepared for his fourth electoral campaign, he wanted to demonstrate that he and his Administration had the "the vision, vigor and were capable of leadership" (Brezenoff, personal communication, 1998). Politically, programs serving children and strengthening the education system were a "good sell" (Brezenoff, personal communication, 1998). The Mayor's top aides thought that if New York City were to develop its own, more broadly available version of the pre-kindergarten model described in Changed Lives, the City would be recognized nationally for its innovation and leadership (Brezenoff, personal communication, 1998; Koch, personal communication, 1998).

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[1] Each year, each of the City agencies would hold public forums to meet with each of the City's 59 community boards. The local priorities would be reviewed by the agencies and depending on how the issues raised by the boards meshed with an agency's overall priorities, the request would be incorporated or dismissed in the agency's budget. The agencies submit budget requests to the Mayor's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) several times throughout the fiscal year. In addition to preparing for the City's budget whose fiscal year begins July 1st, the agencies must submit financial information to OMB on a quarterly basis. This information is used for the surplus/needs analyses which are conducted in preparation for the financial plan submitted to the Financial Control Board in January (Caraley, 1982). Agencies negotiate throughout the year with the Mayor's Office and the Office of Management and Budget. Some items would appear on the agenda repeatedly with little expectation of being approved but as a statement of principal. The agency agenda was commonly referred to as a "wish list" by City personnel. Universal preschool services had not appeared on the agenda of any of the City agencies.

As the Mayor credited with, and took much pride in, having led the City out of its most severe fiscal crisis, it was important to Mayor Koch to continue to be viewed as leading the City into economically prosperous times (Koch, personal communication, 1998; Brezenoff, personal communication, 1998; Francan, personal communication, 1997). For the first time in a long spell, the City had funds to expend on new programs, and the Mayor was committed to targeting the new revenues both toward reducing tax burdens and restoring services. The priority services to be restored were education and public safety (Conroy, personal communication, 1998; Brezenoff, personal communication, 1998; Koch, personal communication, 1998). The Administration's efforts to reverse rising high-school drop-out rates and special education enrollments had only been moderately successful (Francan, personal communication, 1997), and the Mayor wanted to assure the business community that New York City's economic renewal would not be jeopardized by an ill-prepared future workforce (Koch, personal communication, 1998; Brezenoff, personal communication, 1998; Francan, personal communication, 1997).

The appearance of responding to several of the pressing social problems simultaneously no doubt enhanced the attractiveness of universal pre-kindergarten to mayoral aides. It is ironic that the multifaceted goals of universal pre-kindergarten would later invite a broader range of criticism and dispute regarding program effects because of elevated and wide ranging expectations. When the program was confronted with dissolution, it was difficult for the public to rally around the loss of a specific benefit. Absent too, was well-grounded support from community and business leaders.

PLANNING TO TAKE THE IDEA PUBLIC

The decision to go forward with universal pre-kindergarten was made swiftly by a relatively small group of political elites who commanded substantial control over New York City's economic, fiscal and political resources and who had a history of working well together. Stanley Brezenoff and Robert Wagner, Jr. are credited with conceptualizing New York City's version of universal pre-kindergarten. Robert Wagner, Jr. was Deputy Mayor and the soon to-be-elected President of the BOE (Koch, personal communication, 1998; Brezenoff, personal communication, 1998; Schwarz, personal communication, 1997). Stanley Brezenoff, then Deputy Mayor, had previously served as Koch's Commissioner of the Human Resource Administration and Chair of the Health and Hospitals Corporation. Brezenoff and Wagner presented their idea for universal pre-kindergarten to the Mayor and a few other staff members, including Marian Schwarz - the Mayor's Coordinator of Youth Services and a personal friend. This core group held considerable decision-making power over the Mayor's preschool initiative throughout the course of the policy and especially in the earlier stages. The concentration of power among the Mayor's close aides became characteristic of the program. On the one hand, it gave the policy the force it needed to move forward with clear direction and resolve. On the other hand, it appears to have closed others out of the process and bypassed well-grounded community and institutional ownership of the program.

Brief consideration was given to expanding preschool services through Head Start providers only, since the expansion to universal pre-kindergarten services was conceived as a modification of the Head Start model. The Mayor's advisors knew that Sandra Feldman, the head of the local United Federation of Teacher's union, would insist that any locally sponsored expansion of pre-kindergarten services involve the BOE (Brezenoff, personal communication, 1998; Cohen, personal communication, 1998). It is less clear how and why child-care providers became part of the policy initiative, perhaps because they were the third leg of early childhood programming and (like Head Start) city-subsidized child care was administered by ACD. City Hall was tuned into the electoral advantages of helping community-based, child-care agencies that served minority children (Nathienel, personal communication, 1997).

No legislation was needed to validate this policy initiative. The Borough Presidents and members of the City Council would be minimally, if at all, involved in the development of the initiative until later, when their votes would be needed for funding to be secured in the City budget.

THE MAYOR'S EARLY CHILDHOOD COMMISSION

When Mayor Koch publicly announced his policy initiative in January 1985, he had already appointed a 12-member Commission on Early Childhood Education, chaired by Dr. Saul D. Cohen, then President of Queens College. The Commission was charged with recommending the best way to implement universal pre-kindergarten services in the City. Cohen had previously worked on Mayoral Task Forces and was known to the Mayor and his top aides as loyal and reliable. According to Cohen (personal communication, 1998), he had some, but not complete, say with regard to the Commission's membership. Cohen hired Dr. Virginia Thompson as Executive Director of the Mayor's Commission on Early Childhood Education. Cohen had worked with Thompson at Queens College, and although she had a strong research background and solid experience coordinating research projects, she was not an expert on early childhood services (Cohen, personal communication, 1998; Thompson, personal communication, 1997). Dr. Janice Molnar, who was hired as Research Director for the Commission, was expected to fill this gap (Thompson, personal communication, 1997).

The Mayor's announcement on January 30th made apparent that the Commission's role was not to make deliberate policy, but rather to develop the best means of implementing the policy he and his advisors had conceptualized. This directive was consistent with the public perception of Mayor Koch as excluding outsiders from his policy decisions and as taking too much credit for the positive changes brought about during his tenure as Mayor. However, his staff praised him for his openness to new ideas and for his accessibility.[2] The Mayor felt that the bulk of his Administration's innovations were initiated by his staff (Koch, personal communication, 1998).

Public reaction to the Mayor's announced policy initiative was immediate and almost entirely positive. The Mayor was lauded by the City Council, the State Commissioner of Education, and by the daily papers for launching a precedent setting and much needed initiative. The New York Times called the Mayor's initiative "a model for the nation." (The New York Times , 1985a). There was a flurry of letters to the editor in The New York Times in the months following the Mayor's announcement, mostly extolling the merits of the Mayor's proposal, though a few questioned whether it wasn't a usurpation of family responsibility (Wright, 1985). Less encouraging were the over 200 letters to Cohen from parents of Head Start children who opposed the public funding of pre-kindergarten programs in New York City; they had erroneously interpreted the proposal as forcing the relocation and replacement of Head Start programs in community-based agencies with pre-kindergarten programs in public schools. Parents objected to unnecessarily exposing four-year olds to the overcrowding and deteriorating conditions existing in the public schools.[3] According to Susan Feingold, then coordinator of New York City Head Start Area Directors and long-time director of the Bloomingdale Family Program, New York City had earlier "ceased to contribute its share of tax-levy funds (non-federal share) to the Head Start program. . .that seriously undermined the effectiveness and stability of Head Start." (personal communication, 1998). These budget cuts led Head Start directors to greet the city initiative for four-year-olds with suspicion.

THE COMMISSION'S WORK

The Commission began its work in July of 1985 and during the next nine months worked around the clock reviewing enrollments, histories, administrative structures, funding sources, and program guidelines of the three public systems that provided educational programs for four-year- olds in New York City — public school pre-kindergarten, Head Start, and publicly funded child care (Molnar, personal communication, 1997). Using data available from city agencies, the Commission estimated that 48 percent of New York City's 100,000 four-year-old children were enrolled in a public or private center-based early childhood program in 1985. According to the Commission's estimates, there were 10,000 children in child care, 7,300 in Head Start, 5,300 in public preschool programs, and 1,200 enrolled in

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[2] Koch's accessibility to staff was mentioned by many of his staff during my interviews with them, including Brezenoff, 1998; Francan, 1997; Kagan, 1997; Schwarz, 1997; Zinnanti; 1997.

[3] This point is made in a memo dated July 8, 1985 from Virginia Thompson to members of the Early Childhood Education Commission. About nine samples of the letters were sent out as attachments to the memo.

recreational programs offered by the City's Department of Parks and Recreation. An additional 24,500 were believed to be in private, licensed and unlicensed child care. It was estimated that less than half of the City's 34,000 poor children attended preschool programs (Early Childhood Commission, 1986a).

One objective of the Commission was to invite the larger community to make suggestions for delivering pre-kindergarten services. The Commission held public hearings in each of the boroughs, invited experts to speak with the Commission, and publicly debated the merits of alternative approaches and essential components of the program. It sent out approximately 10,000 notices of public forums in an effort to incorporate the views of a broad constituency of individuals and groups.[4] Remarkably, approximately 1,100 individuals participated in meetings, wrote in or telephoned the Commission with their views on universal pre-kindergarten during the fall of 1985 (Early Childhood Education Commission, 1986b).

Commission members and staff also made 22 site visits to the variety of City public and private child-care, Head Start, and Department of Parks and Recreation preschool programs regarded as exemplary models by central agency administrators, parents and providers (Early Childhood Education Commission, 1986b).

The Commission invited professional experts to write position papers whenever they believed there was a gap in their knowledge. For example, papers were written on integrated preschool programs for children with special needs and on the Family Court process.

The Commission was struck by the lack of information on private programs and sought to enhance the data that was systematically collected and computerized on publicly funded programs. It developed and distributed its own survey instrument to the over 1,000 programs licensed by the New York City Department of Health in the fall of 1985, and nearly 40 percent of the programs responded.

While group interests varied widely, a consensus emerged from the different meetings about how to best implement universal pre-kindergarten. Any debate that existed focused largely on the rank order of priorities, rather than on what should be included. The recommendations that surfaced as priorities were:

- Any new program should build upon the multisystem infrastructure in existence and use BOE, ACD child-care and Head Start sites. It should respond to the different needs of the growing number of working parents[5], special-needs children, and multicultural families.

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[4] Notices were sent to advocacy groups, ACD child-care centers, Head Start teachers, administrators, community-based agencies, community planning boards, community school boards, community school districts, early childhood professionals and programs, foundations, media and public affairs directors, New York City Board of Education administrators, teachers, New York City Department of Parks and Recreation preschool program administrators and teachers, New York State Regents, social-service agencies, public school parent and teachers associations, public officials, religious organizations, sponsoring/provider agencies, university early childhood professionals, youth boards, and others who communicated an interest in universal pre-kindergarten to the Commission (Early Childhood Commission, May 1986).

[5] The need for full-day child care was brought up in nearly all of the forums. In some cases it was presented as a priority and in others it was used as an example of the diversified needs of families. Most argued that it was important for four-year-olds to receive all services in one setting and that schools most likely would not accommodate the needs of children who needed full-day services.

- Early childhood programs should be universally available to all four-year-olds and responsive to the different needs of four-year-olds.[6]

- High-quality programming was considered a top priority for all. New York City should phase in high quality programs over a number of years rather than rush to open ill-prepared and ill-performing services. Children with the greatest need and fewest resources available to them should be served first.

- Parental involvement in the program was considered a critical factor in predicting a child's success.

- It was felt that on-going staff training and development were important factors in achieving and maintaining program quality.

- Program monitoring and evaluation were deemed essential to maintaining program quality and understanding program success.

- Pre-kindergarten programming should be differentiated from primary school curriculums. ("Four-year-olds are not short first graders.") It was believed that programming should be appropriately responsive to the social, developmental and cognitive needs of four-year-olds and should be delivered by appropriately trained staff.

- Services to children and families should be comprehensive. Programs should include a social worker/family advocate who provides social supports and refers families to other services when needed. Programs should include health assessments and record keeping, nutrition, and developmental assessments.

- Salary equity among teachers in a variety of settings was considered essential. The salaries of ACD staff were substantially below those of pre-kindergarten and kindergarten teachers at the BOE.

There were calls for a separate unit to coordinate, administer and monitor the funding, program development and implementation of the early childhood initiative, and some urged the City to introduce the services slowly (Early Childhood Commission, 1986b). Several groups specifically feared that BOE would swallow other program settings if the initiative were to be housed at BOE. Others cited BOE's poor track record on recent initiatives such as all-day kindergarten, which had high drop-out rates. In contrast, BOE believed it had the best ability to implement a universal pre-kindergarten program; while it would consider contracting with other agencies in certain communities, BOE felt strongly that it should have control of the program (Cohen, personal communication, 1998; Francan, personal communication; 1997; Thompson, personal communication, 1997).

GARNERING SUPPORT FROM THE ADVOCATE COMMUNITY

The advocacy and provider community, whose solid participation at the Commission's events provided Commission members with a good sense of what was going on at the community level, was doubtful that the City would incorporate their views. Some advocates feared that New York City would try to transform the existing community-based network for early childhood services into centralized ACD classrooms (Meekes, personal communication, 1998). Because of past experiences with the Administration, advocacy groups had low expectations that the City would incorporate their positions, and they redirected their efforts to state and national levels. The advocate community

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[6] The exception to this was notably expressed by parents at the borough forum in Staten Island. Parents felt there was a need to expand child care services but that there was little indication that there was a need for universal pre-kindergarten. They believed that many four-year-olds were physically and emotionally not prepared for school, and tax dollars could be better used toward high quality affordable child care. All day kindergarten was referred to as a recent BOE disaster in their communities. With 40 kindergarten children in a classroom, the Staten Island parents felt kindergarten had become a "glorified baby-sitting service for working mothers." (Early Childhood Commission, 1986b).

initially met the Mayor's proposal with confusion, anger and frustration. The City had recently cited fiscal constraints as the reason they could not institute the Early Childhood Coalition's priorities (a pension program for low-paid Head Start workers and increased staffing in overcrowded full-day kindergarten classrooms) (Ward, personal communication, 1999). Total funding would have been $12 million for the Coalition's priorities compared to the high price tag expected for universal pre-kindergarten.

Child-care providers were threatened by any new City dollars for early childhood services that were not targeted to them (Meekes, personal communication, 1998; Ward, personal communication, 1998). From their perspective, BOE stole their teachers (who were trained at ACD) and diminished their client base when New York City instituted full-day kindergarten. They were afraid that the Mayor's new initiative would allow BOE to take their four-year-olds away. Rhonda Carloss-Smith, then Director of Advocacy at Child Care, Inc., recalls that it took all the advocates could do to change the negative attitude of child-care and Head Start providers toward universal pre-kindergarten (personal communication, 1998). The child-care advocate community opposed the expansion of preschool education and care through BOE because they believed it was not in the best interest of children. It was the Day Care Coalition's position that the city's nonprofit child-care and Head Start programs were as good or better than public-school programs and that housing preschool services at BOE would only increase and complicate the number of providers caring for young children of working parents each day. The Coalition felt strongly that the racially and ethnically diverse staffs of child-care and Head Start programs were a more realistic reflection of the children to be served than BOE's mainly white staff (Child Care, Inc., April 5, 1985). The Coalition welcomed the opportunity to direct education funds to child-care and Head Start programs, but did not want all early childhood education and care programs to be subsumed under BOE (Child Care, Inc., November 7, 1985).

The Commission's director, Virginia Thompson, helped Ward and others understand that the Mayor's initiative was moving forward and that more could be gained for child-care providers by supporting the initiative than by opposing it (Ward, personal communication, 1998). Eventually child providers became supportive of universal pre-kindergarten, especially when it became apparent that if they continued to oppose the initiative, BOE would become the exclusive recipient of these new funds (Thompson, personal communication, 1998; Ward, personal communication, 1998).

Interestingly, the provider and advocate community uniformly recall that as a result of their letter writing and testifying, they were able to sway the City into using Head Start and ACD child-care providers and not just BOE sites. What makes this interesting is both the uniformity around which this victory is recalled in the community and the fact that according to key City officials, all three types of providers were to be incorporated from the inception of the initiative (Brezenoff, personal communication1998; Schwarz, personal communication, 1998).

It is curious that no one recalls why full-day pre-kindergarten services were dropped from the discussion. The fragmentation of the City's early childhood services was seen as one of the fundamental weaknesses in the system.[7] It is likely that funding restraints pushed this issue to the back burner without too much resistance, given the other issues that were being considered at the time. Several individuals recall assuming that once the program got off the ground, the need for full-day pre-kindergarten services for children of working parents would be addressed again, but no one could recall specifically how or when this was decided (Brezenoff, personal communication1998; Schwarz, personal communication, 1998; Thompson, personal communication, 1997).

MANAGING COMPETING INTERESTS AMONG CITY AGENCIES

Managing the competing interests of the advocacy groups and providers consumed a substantial portion of the Commission's efforts. These efforts were counterbalanced by the need to manage the competing interests that arose within the Administration. Commission staff met and frequently communicated with different representatives from ACD, BOE, the Office of Operations and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). They also met with

[7] This was addressed in a memo from Antony Ward, Rhonda Carloss-Smith and Jeanne Frankl to City Council and Board of Estimate on June 2, 1986.

representatives from the Department of Health and the Fire Department in an effort to resolve the differences in the licensing requirements for BOE classrooms and for ACD-sponsored facilities, which had more stringent requirements (Thompson, personal communication, 1997; Molnar, personal communication, 1997; Schwarz, personal communication, 1997).

The Mayor's Office, OMB, the Office of Operations and BOE were reluctant to add yet another initiative to the BOE agenda. Upper-level managers at OMB were averse to "throwing any new dollars" at BOE, because it was perceived to be an unwieldy bureaucracy under continual public criticism for its shortcomings through the mid-1980s (Francan, personal communication, 1997). The management scandals involving the Chancellor in the later 1980s and BOE's seemingly intractable fiscal problems, had further eroded confidence in BOE.[8] Although confidence in BOE was slowly returning, OMB's position was that overburdening BOE would endanger progress (Francan, personal communication, 1997).

BOE feelings about universal pre-kindergarten were mixed. Many of the schools were still grappling with the space and staffing issues which arose from the city-wide expansion to full-day kindergarten and class size reduction. Several top BOE and OMB staff preferred extending class-size reduction to more grades over introducing a new early childhood program (Francan, personal communication, 1997). BOE was concerned that the early childhood initiative was yet another costly program imposed on them, which was not a top priority of the Board, - - one that would be implemented at the expense of the Board's higher priorities such as "the high school allocation formula, or the junior high competitive project or afterschool programs."[9] At the same time, BOE saw this as an opportunity to restore their preschool services, which had been decimated by the New York City's fiscal crisis in the mid-1970s (Craigman, personal communication, 1997). BOE felt that it should lead any preschool initiative and could not risk losing control of pre-kindergarten services to ACD (Conroy, personal communication, 1997). This certainly was consistent with the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) national message. Led by the efforts of Albert Shanker, who rose through the ranks of New York City BOE politics, AFT was leading a fight to include preschool services on the national education agenda following the failed federal child-care bill in 1971.[10]

OMB objected to the financial commitment that the universal pre-kindergarten initiative would impose on New York City.[11] The first year of the preschool initiative was to be entirely financed by a City tax levy, and New York City was to pay for the start-up costs of new slots in outgoing years as well. The plan was to attract federal Chapter I[12] and New York State pre-kindergarten dollars and gradually reduce the City's share, but there were no assurances that these funds would flow to New York City. Nor was OMB confident that the estimated costs reflected the full costs of operationalizing the program. OMB favored a targeted approach over universal provision of the proposed services and argued that research presented by Zigler (1985), Zimiles (1985) and Hebbeler (1985) questioned the ability of high-quality early childhood programs to make a significant difference in the later school careers of middle-class children.[13]

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[8] Fueling the negative attitudes directed at BOE was the resignation of the New York City Schools Chancellor, Anthony J. Alvarado in May of 1984, amid charges of professional misconduct largely from his handling of financial affairs at the Board (Fried, *New York Times*, December 12, 1984). The better part of the latter half of 1984 was consumed by BOE's attempts to hire a new chancellor and a new fiscal director (Maeroff, New York Times, January 13, 1985). The uncertainty of BOE's future and its shaky recent past made City Hall insiders circumspect about how extensive BOE's role should be in this new policy endeavor.

[9] Nathan Quinones, Chancellor of the NYC Board of Education in a memo to Stanley Brezenoff, Deputy Mayor for Operations, March 6th, 1986.

[10] President Nixon vetoed the Comprehensive Child Development Act of 1971. This bill would have created a nationally coordinated network of universal, comprehensive child-development programs. Failed legislation was reintroduced in 1974 and 1975. Expanding preschool programming through the public schools became a legislative priority for AFT, who fought to have it included in child care related legislation introduced.

[11] This is the summation of opinions expressed in several memos authored by the Director of OMB, Paul Dickstein, 1986, and the Deputy Director, Mary Keegan, December 17th, 1985. These views were corroborated by Richard Francan, Assistant Director for Education at OMB during two interviews with him in 1997

[12] Chapter 1 provides financial assistance to local education agencies (LEAs) to meet the special needs of educationally deprived children who live in areas with high concentrations of children from low-income families.

[13] As stated in a memo from Mary Keegan, Deputy Director of OMB, to Virginia Thompson, Executive Director of the Early Childhood Commission on December 17, 1985.

ACD, which administered both the publicly subsidized child-care and Head Start programs for New York City, was suspicious about entering into any kind of joint venture with BOE. One of ACD's concerns was that its preschool programs would be devoured by BOE (Ferrar, personal communication, 1997; Nathienel, personal communication, 1997; Hawkins, personal communication, 1997). Officially, HRA endorsed the Commission's recommendations but felt that universal eligibility for part-day programming represented a major departure from ACD's means-tested, full-day and year-round programming and would call for a reallocation of existing services and fee structures.[14] HRA was also concerned that the growth in HRA and ACD workloads would create the need for additional resources at a time when federal and state funding was tenuous[15] and that the creation of a Mayoral office to coordinate and oversee the system would result in duplicative administrative requirements that would further delay social-service integration. ACD argued in favor of a longer planning and phase-in period.

The Mayor's Office of Operations felt that the plan the Commission was developing was too ambitious to implement in so short a period of time. As Ellen Lovitz, the Assistant Director of the Mayor's Office of Operations stated in a memo to Marian Schwarz, "Given the space constraints already facing the Board of Education and the City in general, attempting to serve 10,000 children in 125 sites in the first year is extremely ambitious. Head Start had tremendous difficulty in expanding in the early 1980's primarily because of site renovation problems; it took more than four years to increase enrollment by 6,000 children."[17] The Office of Operations raised concerns about the City's solo financial commitment in the first year and regarding the salary and service inequities which were likely to arise. These inequities had been raised by ACD, providers and advocates as well[18] and were not resolved during the life of the program.

Undoubtedly, some of the concerns raised by the agencies were well-founded, yet the emphasis on unanticipated costs and higher workloads may have been used to negotiate their needs (Francan, personal communication, 1997; Schwarz, personal communication, 1997). Since the initiative emanated from the Mayor's Office, the agencies knew they had some leverage in bargaining for resources specifically directed to the initiative. In the budget bargaining that went on throughout the year among the agencies, OMB and the Mayor's Office, the agencies were intent on using this opportunity to their full advantage.[19]

ISSUING THE FINAL REPORT

Carefully balancing the opposing interests of all the players, the Commission was able to orchestrate a comprehensive, well-written plan which was delivered to the Mayor on March 26th, 1986. The Commission's formal report of recommendations was titled Take a Giant Step: An Equal Start in Education for All New York City Four Year Olds (Glantz et al., 1991). The program operationalizing this policy initiative was named Project Giant Step. The Commission's findings and conclusions were summarized in ten recommendations offered (see Appendix A).

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[14] A memo from HRA Commissioner George Gross to Marian Schwarz dated March 7,1986, summarizes the endorsement and concerns of HRA and ACD.

[15] HRA Commissioner Gross refers to the potential federal revenue losses to the City from the Gramm-Rudman (federal budget reduction bill) proposal that was being negotiated in his March 7,1986 memo to Marian Schwarz.. Commissioner Gross was also hesitant to believe that State legislation would be enacted that would more than double the State's current share of expenditures on early childhood services.

[16] This was detailed in a memo written by a George Gross, Commissioner of the City's Human Resources Administration to Marian Schwarz on March 7th, 1986.

[17] As quoted from a memo from Ellen Lovitz, Assistant Director for the Mayor's Office of Operations to Marian Schwarz on March 7th, 1986.

[18] ACD's concerns regarding parity in staff salary and benefits were again addressed in the addendum to Commissioner Gross's memo to Marian Schwarz dated March 7, 1986, believed to be authored by then ACD's Deputy Commissioner Doby Flowers.

[19] Commenting on OMB's thinking "during the generation of "Take a Giant Step", Marian Schwarz wrote that she believed "some of the issues are well taken and some rather specious. I believe they would agree with this." (October 15th, 1985).

The Commission's report recommended that after a four-year phase-in period of 10,000 young children each year, all parents would have the option of enrolling their four-year-olds in a publicly-funded, high-quality and service-integrated program located either within a public school, a City-sponsored child-care center or a Head Start center. During the initial year, the target would be community school districts with the highest concentration of children in need, i.e. areas with the highest proportion of four-year-olds who were unserved in publicly funded programs, whose family income was at or just above poverty level, and in whose homes English was a second language. The Commission sought to build the proposed program on existing administrative and service delivery structures. It believed that this would allow the City to "take advantage of established personnel, space, and funding sources; to provide parents with program options; and to concentrate on developing programs for children, rather than on new administrative structures" (Thompson and Molnar, 1987). The Commission contended that the decision to incorporate public schools, child-care and Head Start providers was made independently, as a result of the hearings and many meetings held (Molnar, personal communication, 1997), but according to key mayoral aides involved in this endeavor, a general strategic decision to involve BOE, ACD Head Start and ACD child-care providers had been made at the time the initiative was conceived (Brezenoff, personal communication, 1998; Schwarz, personal communication, 1998).

Reviewing the information gathered on pre-kindergarten models around the nation, the Commission found that one lead agency was commonly designated to administer the program, with the possibility of contracting out some of its services. The Commission sought to create a collaborative system between two mammoth agencies that had long-held professional rivalries and separate histories of early childhood programming (Gatenio, 2002). Cognizant of the many turf issues related to designating either agency as the lead, the Commission recommended that a mayorally appointed office be created and be vested with the authority to exact interagency cooperation and collaboration. That office would be responsible for overseeing the implementation and administration of Project Giant Step.

National standards and a literature review were used to establish what the Commission defined as essential elements of high quality programming for four-year-olds, elements that were to be integral to Project Giant Step. They were: (1) a comprehensive curriculum supporting social, cognitive, emotional and physical age appropriate development; (2) class size limited to 20 children per two adults; (3) experienced and well-trained teachers and assistant teachers who receive pre-training and ongoing staff development services; (4) adequate indoor and outdoor space furnished with age-appropriate play equipment; (5) access to social services for children and their families; (6) strong parental involvement; (7) a comprehensive nutrition program for children and families with at least one nutritious meal and snack per day; (8) health, vision, hearing and dental screening and (9) referrals and systematic program monitoring and evaluation.

Recognizing the critical differences in staff requirements at ACD and BOE, the Commission recommended that a uniform set of professional credentials be established at the onset and that the salary and benefit inequity across the systems be addressed immediately. BOE teachers had higher starting salaries, significantly higher salary enhancements for longevity and educational attainment, fewer working days [20] and better employee benefits than ACD teachers (Early Childhood Education Commission, 1986a). Although the Commission urged the City to move toward system parity, it did not include the costs or plans for how this would be done in its report.[21]

CORPORATE AND FOUNDATION INTEREST IN PROJECT GIANT STEP

The Early Childhood Education Commission's plan called for specific systematic monitoring and evaluating of the project to ensure that the standards established for quality and effectiveness were being met. Early on, the Commission and staff members had courted corporate and foundation interest in the Mayor's proposal (Molnar, personal communication, 1997; Schwarz, personal communication, 1997). It was hoped that this interest would develop

[20] There were 182 working days at BOE compared to 250 working days at ACD child care and 218 working days at Head Start as reported in a report by the Early Childhood Commission (1986a).

[21] This is specifically cited as an issue in the OMB memo from Paul Dickstein, Director of OMB, to Stanley Brezenoff, First Deputy Mayor on March 6th, 1986.

financial support as plans proceeded. Schwarz, Thompson, and Molnar, and later others from ACD and BOE, met with the Ford Foundation beginning in the Spring of 1986 to discuss the possibility of the Ford Foundation funding the evaluation of Project Giant Step, and/or expansion efforts, staff development and training services, and perhaps the establishment of the local early childhood centers (Miller, personal communication, 1998).

Other organizations were also developing proposals to study different aspects of the program, and several of them planned to submit proposals to the Ford Foundation for funding centers (Miller, personal communication, 1998). Child Care, Inc. expressed an interest in studying how parent needs and preferences affected enrollment in Giant Step and how child-care needs were being met as a result of the adoption of universal pre-kindergarten. The Fund for the City of New York was interested in monitoring and evaluating the advocacy of the pre-kindergarten program. Bank Street was interested in studying the coordination of the program and in evaluating the effect of the program on teacher recruitment and retention. The New York Community Trust was interested in supporting technical assistance needs of the program. The Center for Public Advocacy Research wanted to conduct ethnographic research, especially on program use patterns. The New York Urban Coalition was interested in providing staff development sessions to Project Giant Step staff. The Foundation for Child Development (FCD) had hired Lawrence Aber, Janice Molnar, and Deborah Phillips early on in the creation of Project Giant Step to monitor the implementation process, identify a research agenda, and assess opportunities for forming a public-private collaboration around Giant Step. FCD would later submit a report to the City proposing to study that role of the philanthropic and research communities in the development of the City's preschool initiative for four-year-olds (Aber, Molnar and Phillips, 1986), but the study was not conducted.

REACTION TO THE RELEASE OF *TAKE A GIANT STEP*

While interest in and support for universal pre-kindergarten services grew outside of City Hall in the weeks leading to and immediately following the release of the Commission's report, resistance to the plan grew within City Hall. OMB was especially vociferous regarding New York City's inability to afford the Commission's plan. The Commission recommended that the services become universally available through a targeted phase-in over a four-year period. The projected annual costs of expanding publicly funded educational program for four-year-olds was as follows: $33 million in Year One; $60.4 million in Year Two; $87.5 million in Year Three; and $114 million in Year Four (Early Childhood Education Commission, 1986a). In each of the successive years, an additional 10,000 children would be served by Project Giant Step, and the cost per child would decrease from $3,298 in Year One to $2,723 by Year Five, reflecting the phase out of the start-up costs (Early Childhood Education Commission, 1986a).

OMB maintained that the Commission did not sufficiently develop a plan for attracting federal and state dollars and that it underestimated program costs by $146 million over the four-year period.[22] Several bills had been introduced in the New York State legislature to expand pre-kindergarten services through both public and community based agencies, but these bills had not gone very far. Federal funding for preschool services was even more circumspect. As a result of the Gramm-Rudman deficit reduction law, OMB projected that New York City Head Start programs would lose $1.2 million and that New York's loss from Social Services Block Grant monies might be as high as $5.6 million. The Social Services Block Grant provided 80 percent of the federal funds toward ACD operated child-care programs. Further cuts to welfare and job training were expected as well.

No one dared to publicly challenge Project Giant Step, perhaps because it was the Mayor's initiative, and it was receiving public accolades. Instead, OMB is thought to have unofficially assumed the position that by slowing down the implementation of services, the universal aspect of Giant Step would be quietly eliminated, and BOE agreed to publicly support the program but argued for greater authority and independence every step of the way.[23]

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[22] As estimated in an OMB memo from Paul Dickstein, Director of OMB, to Stanley Brezenoff, First Deputy Mayor on March 7th, 1986.

[23] Several individuals interviewed confidentially shared their belief that OMB had adopted this strategy., and indeed, no alternative was offered during the interviews to explain OMB's role in Giant Step.

OMB's concerns triumphed, as is evident in the Mayor's response to the Commission's report. While lauding the work and endorsing the recommendations of the Commission in principle, Mayor Koch wrote to the Commission that, "In light of the President's budget proposal and the passage of Gramm-Rudman, implementation of even my highest priority new initiatives, of which this is certainly one, must be considered uncertain...I have asked the First Deputy Mayor and the Budget Director to carefully review the proposed program, its costs and implementation schedule and recommend to me an approach which the City can afford. I anticipate that we will have to begin the program on a more modest scale and build it at a slower pace than you have recommended."[24] Instead of the $33 million that the Commission had recommended to serve 10,000 children in the first year, $8.03 million was allocated to Project Giant Step to serve 3,000 children in year one. Of the $8.03 million, $1.3 million (out of $2 million available statewide) would be drawn from the New York State Experimental Pre-kindergarten expansion funds (these funds could only be used to support pre-kindergarten programs in the public schools); $1.3 million was derived from BOE's own budget; and $5.4 million from city tax levy. These monies were to be allocated as follows: $4.95 million to BOE; $2.89 million to ACD; and $190,000 for the creation, administration and services provided by the Mayoral Office for Early Childhood Services.

TAKING A GIANT STEP FORWARD: GOING OPERATIONAL

The release of the Commission's report widened the playing arena and the range of players involved (see Appendix B). Having received a modified commitment from the Mayor, interested parties now proceeded to negotiate the details of the plan put forth by the Commission. Within two months of releasing the report, the Commission staff was dismissed. The staff was surprised and questioned whether the continuity of the planning was compromised as a result of its dismissal (Molnar, personal communication, 1997). Others assumed that staff would be excused along with Commission members because the Commission had appointed them (Schwarz, personal communication, 1997). Several individuals interviewed confidentially said that they believed Commission staff was excused because of the tensions existing between Cohen and Schwarz during the planning phase. As chair of the Commission, Saul Cohen believed that he was expected to report to the Mayor and confer on issues with Stanley Brezenoff and Robert Wagner, Jr., as necessary and appropriate (Cohen, personal communication, 1998). The situation was interpreted differently by Marian Schwarz (Schwarz, personal communication, 1997). The Mayor had delegated the responsibility of implementing the project to Schwarz, which included seeing to it that the Commission produced a quality report with recommendations that could be implemented. As part of her role as overseer, she believed it was within her authority to direct and if necessary, reject the work of the Commission. The managerial styles of Schwarz and Cohen seemed to have clashed as well -- Cohen being an effective delegator who left the details to competent staff, and Schwarz being more of a hands-on manager who immersed herself in the details of the report if she believed that was necessary to produce a quality product. It seems that the tensions between Schwarz and Cohen influenced staff persons, who during the production of the final report disagreed with Schwarz about the content of the report (Molnar, personal communication, 1997; Thompson, personal communication, 1997).

The single most important thread tying the Commission planning phase and the initial program operationalization stages was Marian Schwarz. Schwarz emerged as the undisputed, focal person for Project Giant Step. It became Schwarz's responsibility to get Giant Step through City Council and the Board of Estimate, to hire a director for the to-be-created Mayor's Early Childhood Services Office, and to insure that the provider agencies had the resources needed to open classrooms and enroll the children.

During the Commission phase, the roles of the City's Board of Estimate and City Council had been minimal, but now that Project Giant Step was included in the Mayor's Executive Budget for fiscal year 1986, the approval of the City Council and Board of Estimate was required. Typically, the two bodies tinkered with the budget at the fringes and used

[24] Letter from Edward I. Koch, Mayor of New York City to Dr. Saul Cohen, Executive Vice President of the Joint Distribution Committee and Chairman of the Task Force, dated Mach 28th, 1986.

their support for the budget as leverage for securing benefits for their constituencies. The Mayor's role had grown more powerful as a result of the fiscal crisis, and most of this power was concentrated at OMB. As New York City emerged from the fiscal crisis and more standardized accounting procedures were instituted at City agencies, the agencies, City Council and Board of Estimate became more aware of how budget estimates were made and consequently were in a better position to advocate budget specifics.

Giant Step was widely viewed as the Mayor's pet project (Krueger, personal communication, 1998) and its inclusion in the adopted budget was assumed. City Council members used support for the project to trade for their priorities, and it was only at the last moment of protracted budget negotiations that the $8 million for Giant Step was included (Brezenoff, personal communication, 1998; Cohen, personal communication, 1997). Publicly, the program continued to be touted as the first universal pre-kindergarten initiative, but internally, the expectation that Giant Step would become a universal program had waned the moment OMB successfully slashed first year funding by 80-percent.

CHOOSING INITIAL SITES FOR GIANT STEP

A decision needed to be made as to whether Project Giant Step would be initially available in only two or three community districts or whether as many as 15 districts would be selected for the first year. Brezenoff and others in the Mayor's Office favored initially concentrating resources in two or three school districts and having it universally available. According to a memo written by Schwarz, early childhood managers at ACD and BOE were opposed to this; instead they wanted to initiate Giant Step in 10 to 15 localities and attach it to existing early childhood programs that had the space and experience in training, hiring and supervising new teachers and programs.[25] The drawback to this approach was that the monies available would preclude universalism within each of the districts because means-testing would be used to determine eligibility.[26]

Schwarz became the main advisor to Deputy Mayor Brezenoff and the Mayor on universal pre-kindergarten and was the critical link between BOE, ACD, OMB, DOH, and the other city agencies involved (Koch, personal communication, 1998; Brezenoff, personal communication, 1998; Francan, personal communication, 1997; Larsen, personal communication, 1998). She met regularly with ACD, BOE, and DOH to develop the Request for Proposal (RFP) for Project Giant Step (PGS), and she kept the New York State Department of Education involved, sharing drafts of the RFP and incorporating their suggestions.[27] After negotiating with representatives of the lead agencies, ten of the 59 planning boards with the highest needs were targeted for the initial round. Need was defined according to a three-part formula developed by the Commission that equally weighed: (1) the number of four-year-olds, (2) the number of four-year-olds on public assistance, and (3) the number of unserved four-year-olds.[28] At least 90 percent of the children enrolled must be from families whose incomes would make the children eligible for free or reduced lunches (Mayor's Office of Early Childhood Education, 1986).

The specific sites were to be chosen through a Request for Proposal (RFP). It was hoped that an RFP be issued before June, which would enable programs to open at least in the schools that fall. Start-up time was expected to take longer for ACD-sponsored centers. But the RFP to both BOE and ACD providers was not sent out until the early August, and a response was due mid-August. According to Schwarz's August memo, there were many more applications than could be funded, but several of those interviewed confided that they believed the initial sites were pre-selected, because aside from need there were considerations about availability of space and capability of a district to take on this new initiative and operationalize it within a relatively short period of time. The districts with the greatest need were also the ones with the highest level of overcrowding, least appropriate space available and fewest resources. Not only was it

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[25] Memo from Marian L. Schwarz to Stanley Brezenoff dated April 23, 1986.

[26] Janice Molnar's implementation notes, June 2, 1986.

[27] Memo from Marion Schwarz to Gery Freeborne, Deputy Commissioner of the State Education Department date July 21, 1986.

[28] Memo from Marian Schwarz, August 20, 1986.

important to the Mayor's Office to serve the neediest children, successful results were required from this first round. The Mayor's Office of Youth Services in consultation with BOE and ACD selected 14 schools located in six districts to initiate Project Giant Step. Shortly thereafter, 12 ACD sites were selected.

KAGAN APPOINTED FIRST DIRECTOR OF MAYOR'S OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

During the summer of 1986, Marian Schwarz advertised and interviewed candidates for the director of the newly created Office of Early Childhood Education. Several months went by before a director of the Mayor's Office of Early Childhood Education was named. In November 1986, Dr. Sharon Lynn Kagan, a prominent child development expert from the Bush Center at Yale University was appointed director of the Mayor's Office of Early Childhood Education. Kagan had been instrumental in the development of early childhood education initiatives throughout the nation, and she was highly respected for her substantive knowledge in the area of child development. Kagan's association with the Project gave it national prominence within scholarly, municipal and educator circles. There was concern that she lacked the experience of negotiating programs through the City's bureaucracies and political machines, and, as an outsider, her knowledge of New York City movers and shakers was limited. Schwarz's expertise in these areas was believed to compensate for Kagan's lack of experience with City processes (Brezenoff, personal communication, 1998). Kagan remained director for nearly nine months.

THE FIRST ROUND OF CLASSES OPENS WITH DELAYS

The first round of BOE classes were opened just prior to Kagan's arrival in November. District school superintendents were notified of the acceptance of proposals in early September and were scheduled to begin on the first of October. Most of the Board's programs were opened by the end of October in schools located in upper Manhattan, Brooklyn and the Bronx. A full month of staff development for all staff preceded the opening of BOE and later ACD classes.

ACD programs were scheduled to begin later due to the increased time needed for space renovation. There were 12 sites or 21 classrooms selected to begin in child-care and Head Start centers. The January opening for ACD sites was pushed to early February. Several programs were unable to open in February due to continued delays in locating and renovating appropriate space. While both ACD and BOE experienced considerable difficulty in locating suitable space in overcrowded communities that had ranked high in the need for services, the situation was more pronounced for ACD than BOE (Ferrar, personal communication, 1997; Larsen, personal communication, 1998; Nathienel, personal communication, 1997). The general deterioration of building stock in the high-need communities where ACD child-care and Head Start providers were trying to open programs meant that the space, once located, often required extensive renovation, costing on average of about $90,000 (Pre-K Alliance, 1988). In addition, ACD programs had to obtain approval from the Health Department, the Fire Department and the Buildings Department (Mayor's Office of Early Childhood Education, 1986). While the standards were not that different from BOE's, the process for ACD-sponsored centers was far more cumbersome. In addition, ACD-sponsored community-based providers often had fewer skills and resources to maneuver the system than did BOE personnel.

The functions and credentials of staff members in both BOE and ACD Project Giant Step classes were similar, though the titles differed (Mayor's Office of Early Childhood Education, 1986a). Each program had a teacher specialist/assistant director to coordinate Giant Step and provide on-site staff development and technical assistance. A master's degree and a minimum of two years experience as an early childhood teacher were required. Each class was headed by a teacher responsible for planning and carrying out the curriculum. BOE teachers met licensing requirements for BOE, and ACD teachers were certified according to the licensing requirements of the New York City Health Code for Preschool programs. Each class had an assistant teacher who at minimum held a high-school diploma. For every classroom, which included one morning and one afternoon session, a family assistant was assigned to link home and school for the parents and the children, conduct social-service referrals and to conduct parenting education workshops. The half-time of a professional social worker was provided for every 120 students to work with the children, families and their staff. For BOE programs, the staff salaries and benefits were negotiated by the United

Federation of Teachers and by DC 37 unions. (DC 37 is the largest public employee union in New York City and part of AFSCME, which represents public employees nationwide.) For ACD programs, salary and benefit packages were negotiated by bargaining agents for Head Start and child-care staff.

Although New York City's budget allocated funds for 3,000 Giant Step slots to be divided equally between BOE and ACD, at the end of the first year there was a total of 40 classrooms with a capacity for 1,960 children — 1,120 in public schools and 840 in Head Start and child-care centers (Pre-K Alliance, May 1988).

FORD FOUNDATION AND BANK STREET COLLEGE MONITOR IMPLEMENTATION OF GIANT STEP

The Ford Foundation shared the Mayor's expectation that Giant Step had the potential to become a national model (Miller, personal communication, 1999). The Ford Foundation awarded a $299,000 grant to the Bank Street College of Education for a pre-kindergarten policy study to document the implementation of Project Giant Step and help solve critical design and policy issues. The Project Director was Robert Granger, and Janice Molnar was hired to contribute to this effort. As Granger wrote in a memo to Kagan explaining the Ford Foundation/Bank Street relationship to Project Giant Step, "The overall purpose of this grant is to assist in the implementation of PGS and to enable others to learn from this implementation."[29] Bank Street's role was initially hazy and evolved over time. Granger and Molnar worked with the central stakeholders of Giant Step, ACD, BOE and the Mayor's Office of Early Childhood Education. Ford Foundation viewed Project Giant Step as a "unique opportunity to investigate the role of the public sector in early childhood programs, to document the design problems faced by different publicly funded systems implementing a coordinated program, to identify effective and efficient solutions to these problems, and to develop technical assistance strategies to insure the quality of the programs."[30]

Several interviewees unofficially shared that they thought the Ford Foundation's funding of Bank Street's evaluation of the Project created tension. The Bank Street consultants whom Ford had hired were at worst moments viewed as watchdogs hired to expose the errors of the City managers and solve the problems the managers could not solve on their own. The administrators more directly involved in the Project's implementation did appreciate the expertise provided by the consultants in helping them tackle design issues. While administrators did not always appreciate the watchful eye of the consultants, Ford's commitment to the project did contribute to the sense that a new national model was being developed, and this seems to have enhanced appreciation of Giant Step among staff at all levels of involvement.

MAKING IT WORK, TOGETHER?

Decision making largely shifted from politically elected and appointed officials central to City Hall to senior civil servant managers during this phase. Decision making mainly fell to a group of agencies whose historical relationships were wrought with competition and distrust of one another. The ambiguity around the lines of authority was an opportunity to enhance the power of individuals and agencies. The opportunity to create power and authority meant that nearly all major decisions became the battleground for the unresolved issues that had been passed onto this group from the close circle of policy insiders.

One of the more contentious issues was that the RFP to evaluate the effectiveness of Project Giant Step was not awarded to BOE. City officials, including Schwarz, Brezenoff and Wagner, were especially interested in documenting the implementation of this initiative, its obstacles and successes (Schwarz, personal communication, 1997; Brezenoff, personal communication, 1998). Kagan wrote an RFP for an independent evaluator to annually assess the cost-effectiveness and cost-efficiency across settings and to assess the program's effects on children, families, staff and

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[29] Memorandum from Bob Granger and Janice Molnar at Bank Street College to Lynn Kagan on the "Plan for the Prekindergarten Policy Study", November 24, 1986.

[30] Internal Ford Foundation recommendation for grant action dated September 19, 1986.

participating agencies. BOE believed that its Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (OREA) should be the recipient of the multi-year contract that approached one-half million dollars annually. OMB, ACD and the Mayor's Office were opposed to BOE performing the evaluation and insisted that an independent contractor evaluate Giant Step (Francan, personal communication, 1998).

To appease BOE's unhappiness regarding the outside contracting of the Project's evaluation, OMB agreed to approve a $40,000 contract for BOE's OREA to evaluate the effectiveness of Giant Step in BOE sites only.[31] An independent consultant was hired to conduct an evaluation of both ACD and BOE sites. Only a handful of independent research organizations had responded to the City's RFP, which surprised the City officials because of the wide interest the project had generated. After a long negotiating process and many drafts of the work plan, a $1.3 million contract was awarded to Abt Associates in the Fall of 1987. BOE wrote a scathing memo criticizing Abt's ability and the waste of taxpayer dollars in hiring expensive outside consultants to perform services that BOE was capable of providing at less cost.[32]

The recommendation of the Commission to establish local early childhood centers that would coordinate services and resource exchange at the local level was never implemented and quietly disappeared from the agenda, largely due to BOE objections that it would duplicate existing services and interfere with lines of authority[33] (Francan, personal communication, 1997). Another topic of conflict for BOE was the supervision of Project staff. Principals were the education leaders in schools but the lack of specific lines of authority under Giant Step had some teachers believing they were accountable to the district's early childhood liaison. Likewise, there was confusion around the supervision of family assistants, social workers, and even the principals (Early Education Evaluation Unit, 1988).

BOE staff and school administrators found many faults with the first year of the program's administration, but overall they considered Giant Step a successful, developmentally-appropriate program which elicited children's potential and helped identify problems that could be remedied early-on in class or with additional support services. Despite control and administrative issues for some principals, most principals supported the program's expansion.

ACD found itself directly competing and simultaneously forced to collaborate with an agency that had been its nemesis for many years. Before the release of the Commission's report, ACD had pleaded for a longer planning period to prepare potential providers and to better assess the availability of affordable and appropriate locations to develop Project Giant Step programming.[34] ACD's concerns were set aside by the decision makers in City Hall for fear of losing the momentum being generated. There was concern that the pre-kindergarten initiative would become a lengthy research process that was never put into practice. Nonetheless, ACD was appropriate in the issues it had raised. Head Start and child-care providers were reluctant to embark on a new project. As one provider phrased it, "We thought it was just another feather in Koch's hat - his pet project - that we were going to have to do the work for." (Krueger, personal communication, 1998). They were wary of investing the time and energy only to have their efforts disbanded as interest waned. ACD administrators worked hard to encourage provider participation, presenting Giant Step as a growth opportunity. Repeatedly, ACD heard providers complain about the difficulty in locating space and the high cost of renovating the space, the extent of which was not truly appreciated until the process of renovation began (Ferrar, personal communication, 1998; Marrapodi, personal communication, 1997).

Giant Step was initiated in areas in which the need was the highest and there was the largest number of unserved children. It was precisely in these areas that the schools were the most crowded, the quality of the available building stock was the poorest, and the cost of the extensive renovation was the highest (Larsen, 1998). ACD had to engage in a lengthy contract and licensure process which yielded standards not all that different from BOE. It took between 24 to 30 months to locate space and renovate it to meet licensing standards, a factor that was never incorporated into the

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[31] As stated in a memo from Marian Schwarz to Mary Keegan on April 27, 1987.

[32] According to a memo dated May 28, 1987 from BOE to the Mayor's Office of Early Childhood Education, OMB and M. Schwarz.

[33] This was first stated in a memo from Chancellor Quinines to Stanley Brezenoff dated March 6, 1987.

[34] This was stated in a memo from HRA Commissioner George Gross to Marian Schwarz dated March 7, 1986.

planning of Giant Step (Larsen, personal communication, 1998). In an effort to streamline the process, Brezenoff later brought the Commissioners from DOH, HRA and the Fire Department together for weekly meetings. A better understanding of the requirements was gained among those assembled, but few changes were made to streamline the process (Larsen, personal communication, 1998; Brezenoff, personal communication, 1998).

Salary inequities between ACD and BOE were a continual source of dissatisfaction among ACD staff. According to the *Advocate's Report on Project Giant Step*, prepared by the Pre-K Alliance,[35] the average teacher salary in public school early childhood classrooms was approximately $33,000 compared to $19,335 for teachers in ACD classrooms with comparable qualifications (Pre-K Alliance, 1988)[36]. This led to problems in the recruitment and retention of qualified staff. Annual turnover in ACD-sponsored centers was 22 percent (Pre-K Alliance, 1988). It is believed that many of the ACD teachers left to assume positions in BOE programs (Marrapodi, personal communication, 1997; Sanchez, personal communication, 1998). BOE had encountered similar problems in overcrowded school districts, but the situation was graver for ACD because child-care and Head Start programs drew space that often required extensive renovation and was subject to a lengthier contract process than BOE programs were required to undergo.

Not only did ACD Giant Step staff grow resentful of their counterparts at BOE, but resentment also grew between ACD staff who did not teach in Giant Step classrooms and those who did. Giant Step teachers and staff attended monthly training sessions, had newly built and furnished classrooms equipped with state-of-the-art instructional materials, while their colleagues struggled to get by with older equipment often in rooms that needed refurbishment. Giant Step staff in ACD-sponsored agencies also kept school teacher calendars and hours, which (unlike their colleagues at child-care and Head Start agencies) meant that their days were over by around 3:00 and that they had summers off.

MAYOR'S OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The first year of operation for Project Giant Step was also the first year of the newly created Mayor's Office of Early Childhood Education, which struggled to carve a role for itself. Finding the fit between two of the City's largest bureaucracies and within the Mayor's Office was a precarious endeavor. At almost every moment there seemed to be competition requiring immediate intervention. A three-day retreat was held in April of 1987 to develop a long-term planning strategy for Project Giant Step, during which a considerable amount of time was spent on evaluating the interagency initiative during its first year (Human Services Management Institute, 1987).[37] Four key issues surfaced at the retreat: (1) the lack of clear and uniform program policies across all providers; (2) insufficient incentives to expand; (3) ambiguous definitions of institutional and individual roles and responsibilities; and (4) inconsistencies across agency lines and with other early childhood education and care programs. Agency personnel complained that crisis management dominated the decision-making process and that different assumptions were used each time. This led to

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[35] The Pre-K Alliance grew out of the provider, educational and advocate groups who supported Mayor Koch on the steps of City Hall when the Commission's plan was announced in May of 1986. The members of the Pre-K alliance were: Advocates for Children, American Reading Council, Bank Street College of Education, Bloomingdale Head Start, Center for Public Advocacy Research, Child Care, Inc., Citizens Committee for Children, Community Services Society, Day Care Council of New York City, NAACO, Jamaica Queens Chapter, Parents' Coalition, Public Education Association, and Women's City Club. The focus of the Pre-K Alliance was to facilitate quality programming for young children in New York City by ensuring "that the goal of the Early Childhood Education Commission (was) fulfilled." (Pre-K Alliance, 1988). Representatives from each of the member organizations assumed responsibility for issues of greatest concern to their organization regarding Project Giant Step to collaborate on the writing of The *Advocates Report*, using data provided by City agencies, interviews with City personnel and providers.

[36] A memo dated March 8, 1987, from OMB Director to Deputy Mayor Stanley Brezenoff, estimated it would cost $15 million annually to increase child care and Head Start teacher salaries to make them equal to BOE teacher salaries. This does not include the cost of additional fringe benefits.

[37] The retreat was held April 27th through April 29th 1987 at the Sterling Forest Conference Center outside of New York City. Frank Schneiger, of the Human Services Management Institute, was hired to facilitate the meeting. Participants representing ACD, BOE and the Mayor's Office were: June Douglas (BOE), Heidi Ferrar (ACD), Anne Gardner (BOE), Robert Granger (Bank Street College), Sharon Lynn Kagan (Mayor's Office of Early Childhood Education), Paul Larsen (ACD), Maryann Marrapodi (Mayor's Office of Early Childhood Education), Marge McAllister (BOE), and Marisa Wohl ((Mayor's Office of Early Childhood Education).

confusion around priorities and responsibilities. ACD and BOE representatives griped that while Giant Step was the priority for the Mayor's Office, it was not the priority of ACD or BOE with regard to time, commitment and resource allocation. Participants felt that the role of the Mayor's Office should be to set early childhood policy for all early childhood programs in New York City and to plan and coordinate implementation efforts. Conference participants continued to talk about moving toward a universal program, though the issues regarding space, salary inequities, recruitment and retention of quality staff, and attracting funding outside of New York City surfaced repeatedly. The retreat ended with a recognition of the "great promise and... significant dangers" that stood before Project Giant Step because the "capacity to implement this ambitious program (was) not in place, while the pressures to move quickly (were) in place and may be irresistible." (Human Services Management Institute, 1987).

Sharon Lynn Kagan returned to Yale University after nine months with the Commission. Her reasons for leaving are not clear, but she continued to be available for consultation to Giant Step. Kagan's Assistant Director, Maryann Marrapodi, was appointed the new director of the Mayor's Office of Early Childhood Education. The transition is described as smooth. Under Marrapodi's directorship, the Project reaped the benefits of the earlier hard work and was also forced to confront previously unresolved issues. Although thousands of new children were being served each year, the central concern was that Giant Step was not reaching the potential envisioned by its creators. This drew criticism from both within the Administration and from outside sources, including the advocate community, evaluators, funders, public officials, and the media. Project Giant Step sought not only to introduce new programming, but to change the existing systems within two large public bureaucracies. Agency personnel perceived this as a threat to the existing configurations of power and influence (Marrapodi, personal communication, 1997; Ferrar, personal communication, 1997). Giant Step was as much about bringing in the new, as it was about throwing away the old.

EVALUATIONS OF PROJECT GIANT STEP

Interestingly, while the Project's administrators heard about the program's shortcomings on almost a daily basis (Marrapodi, personal communication, 1997), the evaluations of Project Giant Step were generally very positive and demonstrated significant improvement from the first year to the second year. In addition to the outside Abt evaluations that were contracted by New York City, Project Giant Step was evaluated by the advocate community and by BOE. Journalists also followed the implementation and achievements of the project throughout its duration.

The Abt evaluation measured the effects of Giant Step in three main areas: (1) children's social, emotional, physical and cognitive development and readiness for kindergarten; (2) parents' attitudes towards, expectations of and interactions with their children; and (3) program staff satisfaction with the Giant Step training and delivery model and its relationship to staff mobility.[38] The evaluation was very positive in all three areas (Layzer, 1990). Two samples were drawn from sites that were fully operational by the end of the 1986-87 school year. The first group of children was selected in the fall of 1987 and followed through kindergarten and first grade, and the second group was selected in the fall of 1988 and was followed through kindergarten.

CHILDREN'S COGNITIVE, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The findings were consistent across the different measures of the children's development. Giant Step children achieved more than twice the cognitive gains that were expected as part of their normal cognitive development, and Giant Step had almost two and one-half times the cognitive gains compared to children in other early childhood programs. The

[38] The Preschool Inventory (PSI) was used as a pre- and post-test measure for the preschool children because it was used for Head Start program evaluations across the nation, and at the time it was the only widely used preschool test for which a Spanish translation was readily available. Children's social and emotional development was measured by the Child Behavior Rating Scale, which was specifically developed for the study by the authors of the two existing rating systems on which it was based, the Bronson General Competence Rating Scale and the Batelle Personal Social Scale. Measures of parental attitudes toward and understanding of child rearing and child development, and satisfaction with program outcomes, were assessed through repeated parent telephone interviews. Staff satisfaction with professional development opportunities and program management was measured through interviews with staff and by staff turnover rates (Layzer, 1990).

gains were found in all ACD and BOE sites, although site variation was considerable. Social and emotional development gains were consistently greater than expected from normal development. The average child developmental gains were one-third higher than the gains expected of children enrolled in programs accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).[39]

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Similar praise was bestowed upon the program's ability to involve parents, both with regard to their children's activities and the educational activities directed at them. In general, Abt found that during the course of program, parents adopted a more positive attitude toward their children's education and deeper understanding of their children's development and their own parenting roles. Four out of five parents helped out in their child's classroom at some time and/or accompanied their children on field trips. More than two-thirds of the parents attended at least one educational class or event organized by Giant Step for the parents. In addition to parenting classes, parents felt that the information and referral services available through Giant Step were an important source of support — a belief that was echoed by BOE's separate assessments (Early Childhood Evaluation Unit, 1989).

The Pre-K Alliance's report noted the multiple opportunities for parental involvement that included home visits, parent-teacher conferences, classroom observation periods, regularly scheduled workshops, and opportunities for parents to volunteer in classrooms and work in the program (1988). The Pre-K Alliance observed that parental involvement varied across sites according to parent interest and program curriculum.

RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND TRAINING OF QUALITY STAFF

Abt reported that Giant Step was successful in recruiting and retaining highly qualified staff despite the high turnover in early childhood programs during this period. For example, the report cites a 21 percent turnover among Giant Step staff compared to a 41 percent national turnover rate. Furthermore, according to the report, the turnover rate during the school year was very low (7.5 percent during 1987-88 and 4.5 percent during 1988-89). During the first year of implementation, the recruitment and retention of qualified staff was cited as difficult, particularly at ACD sites, but by the end of the second year there was considerable improvement. The BOE's OREA report further observed that the relationship with school staff was problematic in the first year and improved in the second year. OREA attributed this positive change to the trust that developed over time among Giant Step personnel and school administrators and recommended that further improvements could "be realized through pre-service activities planned for district and school-based administrators to discuss project roles and relationships and the philosophy of Project Giant Step." (Early Childhood Education Unit, 1989, p.45).

Acceptance of each other's roles was an important factor in the success of Giant Step, and it showed signs of solidifying in the second year (Marrapodi, personal communication, 1997; Hawkins, personal communi-cation, 1997; Ferrar, personal communication, 1998). Centralized training sessions helped BOE and ACD staffs accentuate their areas of common concern rather than their differences, and were highly rated by participants. Despite the positive attitudes among BOE and ACD staff that the training sessions were able to engender, the salary inequity between the ACD and BOE staff was a source of considerable tension and largely responsible for the difficulties ACD endured in retaining qualified staff members (Ferrar, personal communication, 1998; Pre-K Alliance, 1988). ACD felt that its early childhood programs became a training ground for BOE staff (Larsen, personal communication, 1998; Ferrar, personal communication, 1998). This tension was somewhat ameliorated by the efforts and ultimate success (albeit limited) the advocate community achieved in later obtaining state-funded salary enhancements for child-care workers.

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[39] NAEYC is a large and influential organization of early childhood educators and others dedicated to improving the quality of programs for children from birth through third grade. NAEYC administers a national, voluntary, professionally sponsored accreditation system to help raise the quality of all types of preschools, kindergartens, child care centers, and school-age child care programs. More than 7,600 programs serving more than 685,000 children achieved NAEYC accreditation by 2001, and an additional 8,300 programs were in process.

The hiring of social workers, psychologists and family assistants was a critical challenge confronting the BOE. Several of the BOE sites reported difficulty in implementing the social services component, and three of the sites remained unable to fill the social worker/psychologist position during the second year of the Project (Early Childhood Evaluation Unit, 1989). Social workers were typically part-time or spread over a number of sites (Early Childhood Evaluation Unit, 1989; Pre-K Alliance, 1988)[40], and the space and facilities for social workers to work with children and their families was often inadequate (Early Childhood Evaluation Unit, 1988).

CURRICULUM

Perhaps the most highly praised achievement of Project Giant Step was its high-quality curriculum that embraced diversity, promoted nurturing and was built upon solid early childhood development and education principles. A range of educational practices was implemented across the sites, each having developmentally appropriate equipment and materials of excellent quality (Pre-K Alliance, 1988). BOE praised Giant Step for successfully providing quality education meeting NAEYC's high standards and believed Giant Step would become a national model. One of the features that impressed observers about Giant Step was how it brought schools, community-based organizations and families together. Not only did the bringing together of "the Board of Education and the Human Resource Administration's Agency for Child Development, deserve support and continued expansion" but others applauded its ability to link "the public schools with a social service agency and combine(s) preschool education with intensive support programs for the parents" (Wells, 1990).

SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN

Shortly after the creation of the Mayor's Office of Early Childhood Education, two task forces were created to help program staff address the unique needs of each child. The purpose of the task forces, which included policy makers, practitioners, advocates, and representatives of professional organizations, was to identify issues of concern and to recommend strategies to Giant Step staff for meeting the needs of individual children within the Giant Step program. One of the recommendations implemented was to administer the Chicago EARLY Test to determine the functional levels of all children within six to eight weeks of their enrollment. Staff was trained to administer the test. About nine percent of all children enrolled in Giant Step met the criteria for special needs (Pre-K Alliance, 1988; Early Childhood Evaluation Unit, 1989). In addition to the universal testing, family workers routinely made home visits and were generally available to parents at the schools. This allowed for early identification of problems and referrals for further diagnosis and treatment.

The multi-ethnicity of the families whose children were enrolled in Giant Step classes presented a challenge for program administrators. Almost one-third of the children enrolled in BOE Giant Step classes primarily spoke a language other than English at home (Early Childhood Education Unit, 1989). Bilingual classrooms were available in areas with high concentrations of a foreign language (most commonly Spanish but other languages too, as immigrant groups changed and increased during the late 1980s) and teachers were trained to allow for the diversity in the classroom (Marrapodi, personal communication, 1997). Over one-half of the ACD staff spoke another language in addition to English, and about one-third of the BOE staff spoke both English and another language (Pre-K Alliance, 1988). Most children had no difficulty understanding English by the end of the year, including those in bilingual classrooms (Early Childhood Evaluation Unit,1989), and they entered kindergarten better prepared to learn (Marrapodi, personal communication, 1997; Marie, personal communication, 1997).

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[40] According to the PreK Alliance evaluation (1988), ACD sites filled social work positions with consultants or in-kind staff, whereas BOE hired full- and part-time staff.

COST

By the city's fiscal year 1989-90, Project Giant Step cost nearly $27 million. The majority of funding for the 280 BOE classes came from the federal government through the Title I program ($14 million) and an additional $5 million of local support was allocated in the BOE budget for Giant Step. ACD's 120 classes were entirely funded by New York City's general tax revenue[41] (Wells, 1990). ACD costs were higher than BOE's because of renovation costs and lower enrollment. Giant Step classes adhered to prescribed staffing ratios that could not be altered in response to under-enrollment, and this contributed to the higher program costs of Giant Step at some sites. Costs per child ranged from $1.79 per hour to $10.24 per hour (Glantz, 1991). The average cost of Giant Step per child ($4.47 per hour) was much higher than the average cost per hour of NAEYC-accredited child-care in the Northeast ($2.16 per hour) but less than the average cost of Head Start in New York City, which was $4.92 per hour per child.

The cost-effectiveness of Giant Step was evident. Nonetheless policymakers were confronted with the question of whether the priority should be to serve more children, meet the needs of working parents, or to continue targeting within high-quality settings. City budget officials had recognized at the initiation of the program that universalism would be costly, and its benefits were expected to diminish as more middle-class children were served.

AREAS NEEDING IMPROVEMENT

Giant Step's most serious flaw was the delayed enrollment of children. Despite plans to serve 40,000 children, less than 7,000 children were enrolled in Giant Step going into its third year[42] (Wells, 1990). The primary reason cited for the dramatically lower than projected enrollments was lack of suitable and affordable space, particularly for ACD. The disparity in BOE and ACD's ability to open new sites became more apparent over time. By March of 1988, BOE had opened 51 Giant Step sites and was serving 4,120 four-year-olds. Of the 51 sites, 38 were opened in the 1987-88 school year. In contrast, ACD opened 19 of the 39 sites it expected to open by the 1987-88 school year. Only seven of the 19 were new sites opened in the 1987-88 school year.[43]

Because classes often did not begin until November or later for ACD, many parents had already made other arrangements for their children, though this did improve over time as the program established itself (Early Childhood Education Unit, 1989; Pre-K Alliance, 1988). The late start also made it more difficult to recruit staff. In the second year of both ACD and BOE programs, the enrollment rates were 90 percent or better (Pre-K Alliance, 1989). In some high-need communities, outreach to parents was difficult, especially among families with loose affiliations in the community (Hawkins, personal communication, 1998; Nathienel, personal communication, 1997). Despite special efforts to support ACD providers, the gap between newly opened BOE and ACD classes widened further each year.

According to Paul Larsen, then Deputy Commissioner at the ACD, another issue that contributed to the low enrollment in some programs was that some BOE and ACD programs were located adjacent to one another. The Mayor's Office of Early Childhood Education did not control the site location of Giant Step within a district because BOE decided the location of its Giant Step classrooms. This left some areas within a district oversaturated with early childhood education and child-care programs, while other areas lacked services (Larsen, personal communication, 1998; Craigman, personal communication, 1997).

Advocates continued to press for stronger consideration of the needs of working parents (Pre-K Alliance, 1989). Repeatedly, family assistants, social workers and teachers recounted the difficulty that working parents had in enrolling

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[41] This was confirmed by Richard Francan's notes at O.M.B., 1990.

[42] Internal OMB memos confirm that less than 7,000 slots were funded for City fiscal year 1989-90 and that the gap between ACD and BOE was growing each year (R. Franken's personal notes, May 24, 1988; OMB staff person Elizabeth, July 16, 1990).

[43] As stated in a memo from the Mayor's Office of Early Childhood Education to the Pre-K Alliance dated March 22, 1988.

their children in the program. All but one of the 26 program directors surveyed indicated a need for linkages to child care. According to the mainly anecdotal evidence the Pre-K Alliance gathered on this issue, working parents either did not enroll their otherwise eligible children in Giant Step or staff helped these parents make informal arrangements (1988). It is believed that some working parents enrolled their children in both the morning and afternoon sessions of Giant Step when they could not make other child-care arrangements (Marrapodi, personal communication, 1997). The needs of working parents loomed in the background but were not a priority at this time (Marrapodi, personal communication, 1997; Larsen, personal communication, 1998; Carloss-Smith, personal communication, 1998).

NEW POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

CHANGING FEDERAL AND STATE ROLES

By 1986, New York City and State were feeling the effects of the federal budget cuts enacted earlier in the decade. While this is not the place for a full analysis of how cuts in federal funding realigned political power, there is no doubt that the conservative agenda that had taken a stronghold in Washington, D.C., had an effect on the public's perception of state and local government roles. As the federal government assigned greater decision-making authority to the state governments and simultaneously reduced funding to localities, increased attention turned to the state government for resources and for the management of existing resources. The role of the state legislature expanded, and advocacy efforts to influence New York State's allocation of resources by special interest groups grew tremendously during the 1980s. Among child-care advocates, there was a surge of interest in lobbying the state legislature because cuts in federal welfare funding, the social-service block grant, and the disappearance of federal general revenue sharing[44] had increased the states' decision-making authority.

Federal education cuts and the failure to enact federal legislation on early childhood services reinforced state authority with regard to growing state efforts to expand publicly supported pre-kindergarten services. Nationally, state involvement in early childhood education accelerated rapidly around 1985, and by 1989 there were 27 states funding pre-kindergarten initiatives with considerable variety among them. In New York too, the State Commissioner of Education, Gordon Ambach, had pushed for the expansion of pre-kindergarten services.[45] The child-care advocates supported the expanding pre-kindergarten services, but sought a blended funding model (combining different sources of federal and state dollars) for the partial cost, or the "educational" aspects of full-day (10 hours) child care (Carloss-Smith, personal communication, March 1998). BOE continued to lobby for fiscal and programmatic control of pre-kindergarten services. Other state proposals to expand early childhood education and child-care services circulated; for some time, enactment looked very likely, but it was stopped cold in the legislature. Carloss-Smith believed that the Teachers' Union's vehement opposition to using state educational dollars in multi-auspices (i.e. outside of schools, and beyond the control of school districts) killed the chances of the legislation succeeding. Acknowledging defeat of a broader use of education dollars, child-care advocates instead focused on securing legislation that would enhance the salaries and give parity to all early childhood workers.

At the same time that New York City lobbied state legislators and officials regarding the expansion of the state's fiscal role for pre-kindergarten services, BOE met separately with these legislators to advance their own position on this issue (Litow, personal communication, 1998; Francan, personal communication, 1997). BOE supported the expansion of pre-kindergarten services but felt that the preschool needs of children could be best served if the funding was allocated to BOE, which would have administrative and fiscal control to contract with appropriate community-based

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[44] City funding for subsidized child-care services was derived from each of these sources for which funding had been reduced during the Reagan Administration.

[45] Lisa Diaz, the state lobbyist for the Mayor's Office on educational issues wrote a memo dated March 2, 1987 to Min Schwarz (Mayor's Office Youth Services) and Mary Keegan (Deputy Director OMB) regarding Commissioner Ambach's campaign to include $15 million in the State Education's Department Budget Request for the expansion of pre-kindergarten services equally through child-care providers and the public schools.

organizations. This would resolve the issue that had baffled Commission members and City administrators – that is how state education dollars could be funneled to community-based organizations. The Mayor's Office knew that it would encounter resistance from both the State Assembly Committee on Social Services and ACD if funding was redirected to BOE. The objections were expected to reflect concern that ACD would be forced to accept a secondary role in delivering services to this population if all funds were directed to BOE. The Mayor's Office and OMB also believed that redirecting funding would rekindle issues regarding salary inequities between ACD and BOE staff. Other alternatives to state funding of pre-kindergarten expansion entailed changes to existing funding formulas that would have political consequences, because either the funds would be driven to New York City or upstate, or larger sums would need to be expended to accommodate the political and educational needs of upstate and downstate constituencies.[46]

THE CITY SCENE

By 1989, New York City's financial situation changed for the worse as the local economy entered a recession triggered by the Wall Street crash of 1987(Office of Management and Budget, 1990). Escalating racial tension and political scandals rocked the City in the latter half of the eighties and added to the precariousness of Koch's election to his fourth term. The Administration was less confident that Koch could overcome the racially related incidents, such as his criticism of marchers protesting the killing of a black youth in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn, Howard Beach, and his verbal lashing of Reverend Jesse Jackson during the presidential primary. Koch's top competitor was a fellow Democrat and long-time associate, then Manhattan Borough President David Dinkins. David Dinkins was a well-mannered, soft-spoken African American. His gentleness and easy-going manner was pitted against Koch's abrasiveness and aggressive style. New York City was poised for change. The philosophical differences between Koch and Dinkins were hardly considered significant by most — both were leaders in the Democratic party — and so what became amplified were differences in their personalities, accomplishments and appeal to voters.

Initially, the Koch reelection campaign focused on the programs and services that demonstrated the Koch Administration accomplishments benefiting all New Yorkers and those that crossed racial and economic lines. The reelection advertisements featured the Administration's major accomplishments, including a ten-year, $5.2 billion housing program, the efforts of the Tactical Narcotics Teams, the economic revitalization of city neighborhoods outside of Manhattan, full-day kindergartens, and Project Giant Step.

By the summer of 1989, Dinkins had received the endorsement of key municipal unions. Koch staff knew that Dinkins was courting the support of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), and they needed to counteract that by publicizing their accomplishments that were of benefit to the AFT. The Koch Administration had turned BOE into a better managed and fiscally responsible agency, but in the process of doing so, tensions had increased between the Koch Administration and BOE, enough so that it may have cost Koch the support of teachers.

While Koch set out to build a positive campaign, his rivals built their campaign on the shortcomings of the Administration. By summer's end, weary of the attack and growing short on funds, the Koch campaign considered going negative. David Garth, who directed Koch's television advertising effort, noted "In order to get to him, the other candidates felt that they had to do a number on the city…There is certainly ground for improvement and ground to criticize, but when you start to look at overall numbers, in jobs or housing — it's never enough, but you don't have to rip the whole house down." ((Levine, August 19th, 1989).

The rivalry between the Koch and Dinkins staff grew intense as Election Day drew nearer, and as the Dinkins staff became more critical of Koch's policies and practices. When David Dinkins was elected Mayor, rumors spread quickly that programs perceived to be Koch accomplishments were in jeopardy, and that Giant Step would be among the first to go. These rumors were never verified, although staffers for Koch and Dinkins consent that there was an animosity

[46] These concerns were shared in an internal OMB memo in 1989 (no specific date included) for discussion among OMB staff.

that had grown during the campaign on certain levels (Brezenoff, personal communication, 1998; Marripodi, personal communication, 1997; Blake, personal communication, 1998; Flateau, personal communication, 1998).

TRANSITION TO THE DINKINS ADMINISTRATION

In building his administration, Dinkins strove to keep enough of the Koch appointees to ensure continuity and yet have enough room for his own appointees and new ideas. There are different perspectives of what the transition was like. Mid- and lower-level managers tend to portray the change period as a sweeping through of all the Koch people, going deeper than typical for a change in Administration. Higher level managers convey the scope of the personnel changes as fairly typical for a change in Administrations. These managers thought that what made the staff firing different from the typical transition to a new Mayor was that the change was within the same political party. Because of the fierceness of the campaign, staff for Koch and Dinkins — who had collaborated many times over the years — were now at odds with one another. The Koch Administration had been there for 12 years, perhaps lending a false sense of security to some staff. The tension between the Koch and Dinkins staff members was reported at all levels.

Those who stayed on included Norman Stiesel, who became one of Dinkins' Deputy Mayors, and Phillip Michaels, who became Dinkins' Budget Director (Zinnanti, personal communication, 1998). Many of the staff that Dinkins brought on had worked with him while he was Borough President. Some of Dinkins' staff were long-time advocates, such as Megan McLaughlin from the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies and Antony Ward of Child Care, Inc., both of whom had been sharp critics of the Koch Administration. At BOE, Stanley Litow, who had previously been the Executive Director of Interface, a public policy institute, was appointed Deputy Chancellor for Operations.

There were substantial differences in managerial practices between Koch and Dinkins that contributed to the formulation of polices. As Mayor, Dinkins encouraged wide participation in decision making, a point of which he was proud (Dinkins, personal communication, 1999). His cabinet consisted of four to five deputy mayors, Corporation Counsel, the Commissioner(s) relevant to the issue, his press secretary and chief of staff. This group would be assembled one to three times a week, depending on what was going on at the time. Others would be brought in as needed for their expertise on an issue. The Mayor preferred to add persons to meetings rather than exclude. Although input into decisions came from a wide variety of sources, the final decision always rested with the Mayor (Dinkins, personal communication, 1999).

Those who had become accustomed to the expediency of the Koch Administration viewed the decision-making process as too cumbersome and lengthy. Dinkins had a hands-on approach, getting involved in the details of the decision-making process. By contrast, Koch believed in delegating more decision-making responsibilities to his staff (Koch, personal communication, 1998; Brezenoff, personal communication, 1998). Koch preferred to have his aides summarize different perspectives on an issue, whereas Dinkins preferred to hear directly from the individual. In part, this may reflect the difference in tenure: Koch in his third term had gained confidence in his staff and their judgment, while Dinkins was developing this in his first term. Regardless, decisions generally took longer under the Dinkins Administration, and it was less clear who had authority and influence with regard to deciding an issue (Francan, personal communication, 1999; Zinnanti, personal communication, 1999).

The effect of hiring advocates had a curious effect on the policy decisions of the Dinkins' Administration. To paraphrase one of the advocates, "our friends were now in control - these were the same people who had shared our criticisms of the Koch Administration. It was hard to be critical of them because they were friends and we had worked toward the same goals for years." (Meekes, personal communication, 1998).

In addition to the managerial and political issues Mayor Dinkins faced in the first year of his term, he and his staff were unpleasantly surprised by New York City's fiscal status. Revenues were far below what they had been led to believe during the campaign, and expenditures needed to be slashed. Federal and state revenues were uncertain. The first and

foremost task the group wrestled with was to get control over the budget. Almost immediately, the Commissioners and policy staff at the Mayor's Office were given instructions to find ways to cut program spending.

Lee Blake, the staff person coordinating education policy issues at the Mayor's Office, recalls that the staff was instructed to turn every stone and pressure each of the agencies to find places where spending could be cut without doing harm (Blake, personal communication, 1998). Blake covered education issues in Dinkins' Borough President Office, including Giant Step. According to Blake, Dinkins always supported Project Giant Step. When I asked Blake why Project Giant Step was discontinued, she told me that she was the person who ended it (Blake, personal communication, 1998).

THE END OF PROJECT GIANT STEP

According to Blake, the reasons for the termination of Giant Step were economic, political, organizational, racial and personal. In Blake's opinion, the series of racial incidents which occurred during the mid- to late eighties in New York City[47] sparked an animosity between Koch and Dinkins staff. Blake said that if she needed information, the last place she would get it would be from the Mayor's Office, and she herself avoided interacting with Maryann Marrapodi whenever possible. With instructions from the Mayor to focus on evaluating program effectiveness and mayoral organization, Blake and the other four policy coordinators in the Mayor's Office set out to restore the City's fiscal health and simultaneously distinguish themselves and the Administration. Blake's evaluation of the Mayor's Office of Early Childhood Education was that the office should be dissolved. It was Blake's firm belief that, "The Mayor's Office does technical assistance and trouble shooting, and it should not be running programs."(Wells, 1990).

The working relationship between Blake and Marrapodi became increasingly strained under the Dinkins Administration. Blake suggested that Marrapodi had difficulty accepting her authority and the new power structure in place, whereas Marrapodi believed that Blake did not fully appreciate the comprehensiveness of the Office's work, the fragility and complexity of the program's relationships (Blake, personal communication, 1998; Marrapodi, personal communication, 1997). Blake was convinced that the budget for the Office of Early Childhood Education was inflated, and it was precisely that kind of overspending that needed to be eliminated in fiscally strained times. The decision to abolish the office led Marrapodi to resign in April, a month before the Mayor's Office of Early Childhood Education was officially shut down.

The management and training components of Project Giant Step were moved to HRA and not BOE, in part due to the escalating budget tensions between Dinkins' staff and the new BOE Chancellor Joseph Fernandez (Blake, personal communication, 1998). BOE's independent fiscal authority seemed to be at the heart of the disagreements between Dinkins and Fernandez, each arguing for the final say in how the budgetary cuts should be made in BOE's budget (Blake, personal communication, 1998; Flateau, personal communication, 1998). The draconian cuts the Dinkins Administration were forced to impose created a high level of tension throughout City agencies (Litow, personal communication, 1998; Zinnanti, personal communication, 1997). The revenue shortfalls were confounded by an untested Administration, which was only first learning its responsibilities and creating ways for staff to work together. One of the consequences of being so new was that budget numbers seemed to change constantly. There were times when no sooner were budget agreements with an agency reached, when new revenue forecasts would be released that voided the agreements that had been made (Litow, personal communication, 1998).

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[47] Blake made reference to three widely-publicized cases: Eleanor Bumpers, a case in which a 66-year old, mentally-retarded, African American women was shot to death by a police officer during an eviction attempt from a public housing unit in 1984; the death of an African American 23-year-old male in 1986, who while walking through the largely white community of Howard Beach was chased by several white teen-agers who were wielding baseball bats and yelling racial epithets, until he was struck and killed by a car; and the conviction of five African-American youth for the multiple rape and severe beating of a young, white stockbroker who was jogging in Central Park in April 1989 (the convictions of the 5 youth were dismissed in December 2002 following the confession of another individual and newly available DNA evidence).

ENTER SUPERSTART

Project Giant Step survived its recreated administrative structure through the spring semester of the school year, but it did not make it into the fall of the 1990-91 school year. Budget constraints were widely cited for the program's discontinuance, although long-awaited state funding for the expansion of pre-kindergarten services was finally to become available for the 1990-91 school year. In the fall, the Giant Step classrooms under ACD auspices were folded into ongoing Head Start and child-care programs. At BOE, Giant Step classrooms were regenerated into a new program, SuperStart. SuperStart consolidated Project Giant Step and the New York State Experimental Pre-Kindergarten Program classrooms. Like Giant Step, SuperStart was designed to provide a nurturing environment promoting the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development of four-year-olds according to the strengths and needs of children. And like Giant Step, SuperStart maintained ongoing interaction with children's families, supported parental involvement, and provided a continuum of comprehensive services for children and staff development.

Staffing for SuperStart was similar to that of Project Giant Step. Each class was assigned one teacher and one paraprofessional, bilingual when appropriate. There were two family assistants assigned to every three classrooms, one full-time social worker for every five classrooms, and one pre-kindergarten specialist for every five classrooms, all of whom were bilingual when appropriate. Again, like Giant Step, SuperStart set aside one day a month for professional development, which focused on creating multicultural learning environments, developing language skills, incorporating classroom enrichment, encouraging parent participation, and recruiting children; health and safety issues were also addressed (Fernandez, 1992). Class size was limited to 18 children. Newly available state categorical funds for pre-kindergarten and federal Chapter I funds were to finance SuperStart, which is how the designers of Project Giant Step planned for their program to be financed down the road.

Unlike the plans for Giant Step to become a universal program, SuperStart remained a targeted program and did not expand very much beyond the converted Giant Step classrooms. Nor did SuperStart formalize the needed linkages between part-day preschool classes and the child-care arrangements of working families. SuperStart did institutionalize preschool services within BOE, a foundation that New York State was able to build upon a few years later when it introduced universal pre-kindergarten through the public schools. New York State's enactment of universal pre-kindergarten services later in the decade is indicative of the interest and need for these services, and perhaps even the soundness of the concept ushered in by Project Giant Step. The question remains then, why was Giant Step discontinued, when it was at the point of overcoming its many hurdles, receiving the long-awaited federal and state funds, and had just publicized its multiyear evaluation revealing a glowing success ?

UNDERSTANDING THE END OF PROJECT GIANT STEP

Giant Step was an important program in the evolution of early childhood education and care policy. Giant Step was built upon the foundations of its predecessors and moved early childhood education and care policy forward by introducing ground-breaking, collaborative strategies. Its planning process was thorough, participatory, wide and deep. It held the political clout needed to see it through implementation. Giant Step had its share of politics, intra-agency rivalries and tensions, but these are fairly typical for the implementation of a new policy. Implementation theorists remind us that political bargaining and conflicts occur throughout all phases of policymaking including implementation, each time reshaping and adjusting the policy to suit the needs of the players at each level (Brodkin, 1990; Levin and Ferman, 1986). This certainly was exemplified by the implementation of Giant Step.

There was no consensus among those interviewed regarding the success or failure of Giant Step. Though Giant Step was a local program, it captivated a large audience and held the potential to become a national model. Nearly everyone raved about the ground-breaking features of the program, its far-reaching influence, and in retrospect, viewed its implementation issues as fairly typical. Despite its programmatic success and its success in overcoming many of the implementation hurdles, Project Giant Step ended. Programmatically, the model was continued through SuperStart, and it can be argued that this same model was later adopted by New York State's Universal Pre-kindergarten program.

Giant Step can be viewed as ushering in a new policy that could not be sustained in the changing political climate of the period. Giant Step is one case, and it is difficult to generalize its course to all communities and all states. As a way of ending this exploration constructively, observations are offered as discussion points intended to be helpful considerations in local implementation of other early childhood education and care programs.

LESSON ONE: A CITY'S INFRASTRUCTURE MUST HAVE THE ABILITY TO ABSORB THE PROPOSED CHANGES

Giant Step was built upon existing policy foundations that provided Giant Step with stability, but this stability was compromised by manifold changes. Giant Step introduced universalism to public pre-kindergarten services; it attempted to integrate early childhood education and child-care policies, service delivery systems and professions, and to combine funding from three levels of government and private foundations. It not only tried to introduce an innovative curriculum for four-year-olds, but it also proposed using education dollars to fund services provided by child-care and Head Start not-for-profit providers.

Although there was support for expanding public pre-kindergarten in New York City, making it universally available was untested and controversial. Universalism ran contrary to growing national support for targeted programs in the 1980s and was fiercely resisted by some City agencies – notably OMB. Giant Step sought to simultaneously integrate early childhood education and child-care policies, service delivery systems and professional roles. Giant Step attempted to fuse at least two different histories – that of child-care and early education – and the professional allegiances that identified each. As though this challenge wasn't sufficiently formidable, Giant Step tried to meld the existing trifurcated early childhood service delivery system under the authority of a newly formed administrative structure. The creation of the Mayor's Office on Early Childhood Education made the lines of authority ambiguous, creating both anxiety and opportunity among the parties involved. Both ACD and BOE were concerned that the Mayor's Office of Early Childhood Education would threaten their autonomy, and they resisted adding another level of governance. Creating another office to oversee BOE operated programs ran contrary to BOE's efforts to assert greater independence, regardless of the merits of the program.

Giant Step also changed the roles of public and private providers in New York City. It required BOE to serve four-year-olds, although the agency's experience serving this age group was both limited and mixed. (BOE's Head Start and preschool programs lost most of their funding during the City's fiscal crisis.) Child-care providers contracted by ACD were experienced administrators of full-day, year-round programs targeted to low-income children whose parents generally worked. These providers were apprehensive about the administrative and budgetary challenges of running universal, half-day programs only during the school year. For the most part, these child-care providers were single-program providers, and the introduction of Giant Step changed this. The difficulties locating and renovating appropriate space challenged ACD and its providers; while ACD struggled with these issues and fell further behind due to delays in opening classrooms, BOE was able to institutionalize preschool services within its organizational infrastructure. The separate agency agendas, the vying for power and authority, professional rivalries, and the distrust regarding each other's intentions were substantial but not atypical in policy implementation.

Toward the latter stages of Giant Step, the planned use of education dollars directed to BOE for pre-kindergarten services under all three auspices also heightened tensions among City agencies. From BOE's perspective, this strengthened its argument that it should be the lead agency. From the perspective of ACD and its contracted service providers, it increased apprehension that BOE was attempting to serve a population that had long been served by ACD. The use of education dollars to fund compatible services in public schools, child-care and Head Start sites also accentuated the unfairness of the salary inequities between public school and ACD providers. For example, although the responsibilities of an early childhood teacher would be nearly identical in any of the three settings, the early childhood teacher hired by the BOE would be earning nearly one-third more than the teachers in the other two settings. The implementers of Giant Step were never able to resolve this issue, nor were they able to resolve the needs of working parents, who needed formal linkages to child-care arrangements. Both of these issues were identified during the Commission phase but were never addressed adequately.

Amidst the creation of a new local government authority and changing work relationships, the roles of the federal and state governments were also changing. Budget cuts and block granting during the Reagan and Bush Administrations in the 1980s restructured the way the federal government related to state governments. State governments were first absorbing their new and increased responsibilities and were growing into their roles as innovators in the mid-eighties. As the larger context shifted, City officials were less confident about funding sources from the federal and state governments.

Giant Step sought to introduce too many changes at the same time. The scope of change was more than could be managed while institutionalizing the new policy initiative. The changes that were likely next steps were accepted with relative ease and minimal resistance, but because a wide array of change was occurring at most times, it was difficult for implementers to adequately attend to any one conflict without neglecting the next one.

LESSON TWO: POLICY IMPLEMENTATION DOES NOT FOLLOW NEATLY PRESCRIBED, SEQUENTIAL STEPS

Kingdon reminds us that "events do not proceed neatly in stages, steps, or phases.... Participants do not first identify problems and then seek solutions for them; indeed, advocacy of solutions often precedes the highlighting of problems to which they become attached" (1984, p. 215). Pressman and Wildavsky learned from their study on implementation that it makes sense to work on implementation issues while creating and designing new policy (1973). There is clear evidence of this occurring with Giant Step. The Commission's planning was thorough, creative and exemplary, but the implementation of the Commission's plan was choppy, at times requiring two steps back before implementation could go forward. Internal policy disputes around universalism, one of the main goals of the program, took place as the Commission's work became public. It took longer than anticipated to secure funding and space, which caused delays in opening classrooms. Giant Step has taught us that the very best of plans often take longer than expected to implement, and fundamental issues are frequently renegotiated along the way.

LESSON THREE: EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL SUPPORT THROUGHOUT THE PHASES OF IMPLEMENTATION IS CRITICAL

A key to Giant Step's success was that it was a priority for the Administration, and key people in the Mayor's Office genuinely cared about its success. The research on implementation suggests that a "fixer" or "invisible political hand" be available to keep implementation on track and resolve thorny issues that had not been resolved at earlier stages (Bardach, 1978; Levin and Ferman, 1986; Brodkin, 1990). Giant Step incorporated such a person at each level of implementation – Schwarz, Kagan, and Marrapodi. The value of a committed "invisible political hand" that was tied into the core policymakers of the Administration was demonstrated by Giant Step. These "invisible hands" kept Giant Step alive through each phase of its evolution. Eventually Giant Step suffered from the lack of an invisible hand connected to the new mayoral administration, thereby failing to protect the program within the new power structure.

Giant Step also taught us the value of keeping the community involved in the formulation and implementation of policies. The Commission made heroic efforts to draw the providers, parents and the provider community in the earliest stages, but there was no formal process for sustaining these efforts throughout the implementation process. Giant Step didn't come from community wish-lists (it was the Mayor's initiative) and although community groups came to support it, further work needed to be done to transfer ownership of the program. The Commission's recommendation that the universal pre-kindergarten initiative include local community planning committees was never implemented, at least in part because of potentially overlapping governance with local school planning. It is reasonable to assume that had these locally-based early childhood centers been established, there would have been better coordination of services and resource exchange at the local level (thus minimizing duplicative services within a district) and there would have been more awareness of and involvement in Project Giant Step at the most local level. The decision to abolish the Mayor's Office of Early Education that administered Giant Step did not elicit public outcry or highly visible protest. Giant Step did not lack support from the community, but the

community did not demonstrate the same kind of ownership that was felt by public officials closely associated with the project.

LESSON FOUR: BECAUSE PUBLIC-POLICY DEVELOPMENT IS COMPLICATED BY INTERLOCKING GOALS, THE PUBLIC NEEDS TO BE REMINDED OF POLICY GOALS THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS

Deciding which goals to address requires a decision process that may precede systematic analysis of the problem itself. Even a single goal can have multiple interpretations, depending on timing and the groups involved. From the beginning, Giant Step had multiple goals, many of which were long-term goals. One of the chief motivations for introducing universal pre-kindergarten was to provide a signal to the business community that the Administration was taking appropriate steps to address its workforce needs. Curiously, the business community held a minimal role during the Commission phase, and there is little evidence that it was involved during implementation. When the Dinkins Administration made the decision to discontinue Giant Step, no one from business held the Administration accountable to its long-term goals. Arguably, universal pre-kindergarten set the future workforce on the course needed to become self-sufficient adults, and eliminating the program should have sparked earlier concerns regarding the preparedness of the workforce. This argument was not reported in any documents reviewed or the interviews conducted.

All of the public entities involved in Project Giant Step advanced their own priorities through their relationship with state and federal government decision-makers. For example, BOE's agenda was influenced by a national education agenda, union goals and its ongoing fight for more fiscal independence from New York City. Likewise, child-care providers incorporated national goals for child care into their expectations of Giant Step, and the conflicts between child-care providers and educators on a national level were part of local turf battles. Giant Step's fate reflected a culmination of BOE's need to assert its independence from City Hall, ACD's competition with BOE for preschool children, and OMB's own perspective on agency ability.

Unlike BOE public school staff who were City employees, child-care and Head Start providers and their staff were part of the not-for-profit community, and they had their own agendas. Contracts with private organizations for service delivery can diffuse policymaking authority because just as policy goals are modified during implementation by public sector managers, private sector administrators also interpret policy goals, but their accountability to the public is further removed. Private provision of services simultaneous with public provision can often act as a catalyst for enhanced public service delivery both with regard to quantity and quality. It is less clear how contracted service providers affected the policy outcomes of Giant Step, although advocates, many of whom were providers, did remark that the process of lobbying City Hall became unexpectedly strained by the appointment of their advocate colleagues to positions of authority in the Dinkins Administration.

The policymaking of universal pre-kindergarten services in New York City emerged over time through a complex and fragmented process that spanned several public and private policymaking jurisdictions, each with its own agenda and historical relationship to the issue. The policy that emerged was a compromise among actors at all levels and all institutional roles. The ambiguity of authority and shared decision making both within the City's public institutions and in the private sector entities, created multiple goals, some of which were in conflict.

LESSON FIVE: POLICY CHANGE IS INCREMENTAL AND TYPICALLY SPREADS OVER A NUMBER OF YEARS — IT IS AS CHALLENGING TO IDENTIFY THE BEGINNING OF A POLICY CHANGE AS TO IDENTIFY ITS END

Typically, a policy process is thought to begin when an issue takes on a public character, and public and private policymakers become involved. Mayor Koch's public announcement of his intention to introduce universal pre-kindergarten services launched a new policy in New York City, but this new policy was an outgrowth of evolving national, state and local early childhood education and care policies. Was the dissolution of the Mayor's Office of Early Childhood Education and later Project Giant Step the end of a policy? Arguably not, because BOE continued a programmatically similar program under a new name, independent from City Hall. Six years later, New York State enacted legislation to implement statewide universal pre-kindergarten services in public schools and community-based organizations using a curriculum and staffing model similar to Giant Step and housed at BOE. From this perspective, Giant Step was more than a program: It ushered in a new conceptual framework that has since taken hold across New York State and the nation. It is in this context that Giant Step should be understood as an important thread bringing together separate historical developments and leading us to the next level in early childhood education and care policy.

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APPENDIX A:

TAKE A GIANT STEP : MAYOR KOCH'S EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION COMMISSION

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION ONE: Publicly-supported early childhood education programs should be extended to assure universal availability to four-year-olds in New York City.

RECOMMENDATION TWO: Extending publicly-funded programs to assure access by all four-year-olds should be accomplished by a four-year phase-in plan which first targets those neighborhoods with the highest concentrations of four-year-olds at educational risk.

RECOMMENDATION THREE: Expanding publicly-funded programs for four-year-olds should build upon the two existing administrative structures - the Agency for Child Development and the Board of Education – and their delivery systems—the community-based organizations which provide child care and Head Start programs and the community school districts which operate school-based pre-kindergarten programs.

RECOMMENDATION FOUR: A Mayorally-appointed office should be created to coordinate, facilitate and oversee the expansion of existing publicly-funded programs for four-year-olds, utilizing the existing administrative structures and their program delivery systems.

RECOMMENDATION FIVE: The expansion of early childhood education programs for four-year-olds should be done with strict adherence to program guidelines that specify minimum standards in nine critical areas.

RECOMMENDATION SIX: A comprehensive strategy should be developed for recruiting, training and retaining a pool of qualified staff for the expanded educational programs for four-year-olds.

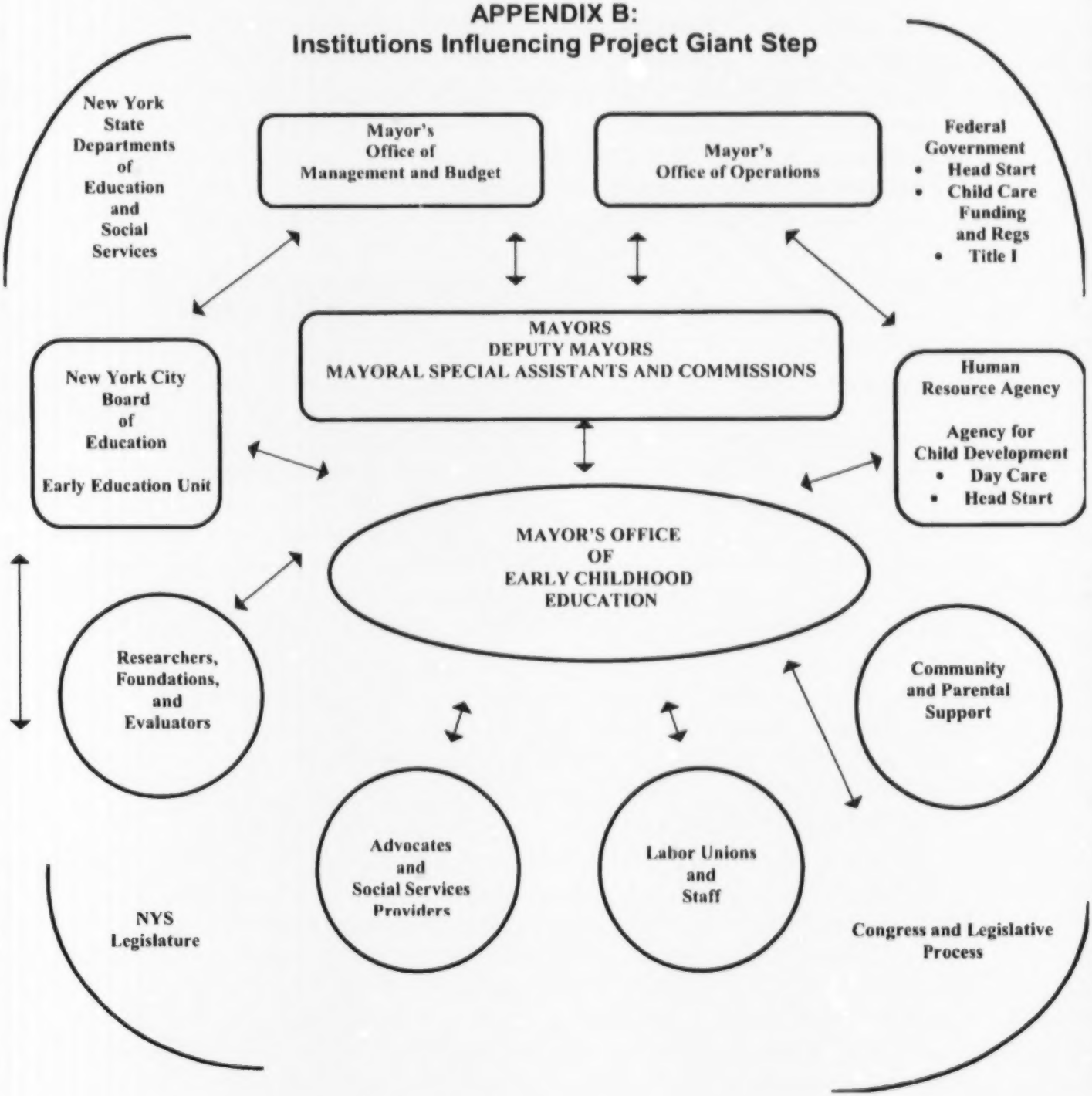
RECOMMENDATION SEVEN: An exhaustive search for space which meets the New York City Health Code Regulations should be conducted by relevant City agencies and coordinated by the Mayoral Office. A special fund should be created for necessary renovation and construction.

RECOMMENDATION EIGHT: A systematic plan for monitoring, evaluation and research should be developed to assure standards of quality and maximum accountability.

RECOMMENDATION NINE: Locally-based early childhood centers should be established to assure coordination of services and resource exchange at the local level, thus minimizing the cost of duplication and increasing cost-effectiveness.

RECOMMENDATION TEN: A fiscal strategy should be developed whereby the City is initiator of the expanded educational programs for four-year-olds, but where all three governmental agencies—City, State and federal—share in full responsibility for assuring universal availability.

APPENDIX B:
Institutions Influencing Project Giant Step


New York State Departments of Education and Social Services
Mayor's Office of Management and Budget
Mayor's Office of Operations
Federal Government
• Head Start
• Child Care Funding and Regs
• Title I
MAYORS
DEPUTY MAYORS
MAYORAL SPECIAL ASSISTANTS AND COMMISSIONS
New York City Board of Education
Early Education Unit
Human Resource Agency
Agency for Child Development
• Day Care
• Head Start
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
Researchers, Foundations, and Evaluators
Community and Parental Support
Advocates and Social Services Providers
Labor Unions and Staff
NYS Legislature
Congress and Legislative Process

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED

Aber, Lawrence (May 1997). Formerly at Barnard University. Wrote a proposal to evaluate Project Giant Step with colleagues which wasn't accepted.

Adams, Gina (November 25th, 1997). Formerly at Children's Defense Fund. Conducted studies of pre-kindergarten availability and expansion nationally.

Blake, Lee (April 8th, 1998). Former Advisor on Literacy and Education Programs to Mayor Dinkins.

Breznoff, Stanley (May 20th, 1998). Former Deputy Mayor for the City of New York under Mayor Koch.

Carloss-Smith, Rhonda (March 26th, and April 2nd,1998). Former Director of Advocacy and Child Care, Inc., and Co-chair of Early Childhood Education Coalition.

Cohen, Saul D. (April 27th, 1998). Chairman of Mayor Koch's Commission on Early Childhood Education.

Conroy, Kathryn (July 3rd, 1997). Assistant Director Mayor Koch's Office of Youth Services, 1985-1987.

Craigman, Jane (November 17th, 1997). Former Director of Early Education, District . NYC Board of Education.

Dinkins, David N. (March 23rd, 1999). Mayor of the City of New York, 1990-94.

Ferrar, Heidi (September 17th, 1997). Former Assistant Commissioner at NYC's Agency for Child Development under Mayor Koch.

Feingold, Susan (April 14th, 1999). Executive Director of Bloomingdale's Head Start.

Flateau, John (August 20th, 1998). Former Chief of Staff for Mayor David Dinkins.

Francan, Richard (April 4th, 1997 & July 1997). Senior Analyst on the Education Task Force at Mayor's Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Promoted to Assistant Director for Education, OMB.

Granger, Robert (March 4th, 1997). Formerly at Bank Street College and hired by S.L. Kagan as consultant for salary equity issues with regard to Project Giant Step.

Hawkins, Helen (March 17th, 1997). Formerly Project Director for Project Giant Step. Currently Director for Special Projects at ACS-ACD.

Kagan, Sharon Lynn (August 18th, 1997). First Director of the Mayor's Office of Early Childhood Education under Mayor Koch.

Koch, Edward I. (July 22, 1998). Mayor of the City of New York, 1978-89.

Krueger, Carol (April 9th, 1998). Director of one of the first Head Start programs to be funded under Project Giant Step.

Larsen, Paul (April 13th, 1998). Former Deputy Commissioner at ACD

Lawrence, Donna (April 29th, 1998). Former Director of Youth Services under Mayor Dinkins.

Litow, Stan (May 4th, 1998). Former Deputy Chancellor for Operations at Board of Education, 1990-94. Prior to this was the Executive Director of the Public Policy Institute.

"Marie" (February 1997). Formerly a Project Giant Step Teacher for BOE. Now a kindergarten teacher in the district.

Marrapodi, Maryann (April 8th, 1997). Director of Mayor's Office for Early Childhood Education, 1987-1991.

Meekes, Donna (April 9th, 1998). Staff Associate for Education at the Citizen's Committee for Children in New York.

Miller, Shelby (September 3rd, 1998). Formerly a Project Officer at Ford Foundation. Oversaw Ford Foundation grants related to Project Giant Step.

Mitchell, Anne (March 10th, 1997). Formerly at Bank Street College. Consultant and researcher on early childhood education and care programs and policies, special interest in pre-kindergarten programs.

Molnar, Janice (May 14th and 20th 1997, and June 1997). Formerly Research Director to Mayor Koch's Commission on Early Childhood Education.

Nathienel, James (April 8th, 1997). Formerly Deputy Commissioner at ACD.

Rochman, Amina (April 5th, 1998). Former Education Specialist for Manhattan Borough President David Dinkins.

Sanchez, Hilda (April 20th, 1998). Co-Director at New Life Child Development Center - one of the first center's to be funded under Project Giant Step.

Schwarz, Marian (September 1997). Former Director for Mayor Koch's Office of Youth Services.

Thompson, Virginia (August 13th, 1997) Former Director of Mayor Koch's Commission on Early Childhood Education.

Ukoli, Eli (several brief conversations March - April 1997). Early childhood education specialist at BOE.

Ward, Antony (March 18th, 1998 and March 26th, 1998). Former Executive Director at Child Care, Inc.(early 1980s-1994) and Director of Temporary Commission on Early Childhood Education under Mayor Dinkins, 1990.

Wolf, Anne E (October 22, 1998). Early Childhood Liason/SuperStart.

Zinnanti, Len (March 28, 1997). Formerly Assistant Budget Director at the Mayor's Office of Management and Budget. Currently Deputy Director of the Mayor's Office of Management and Budget.

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